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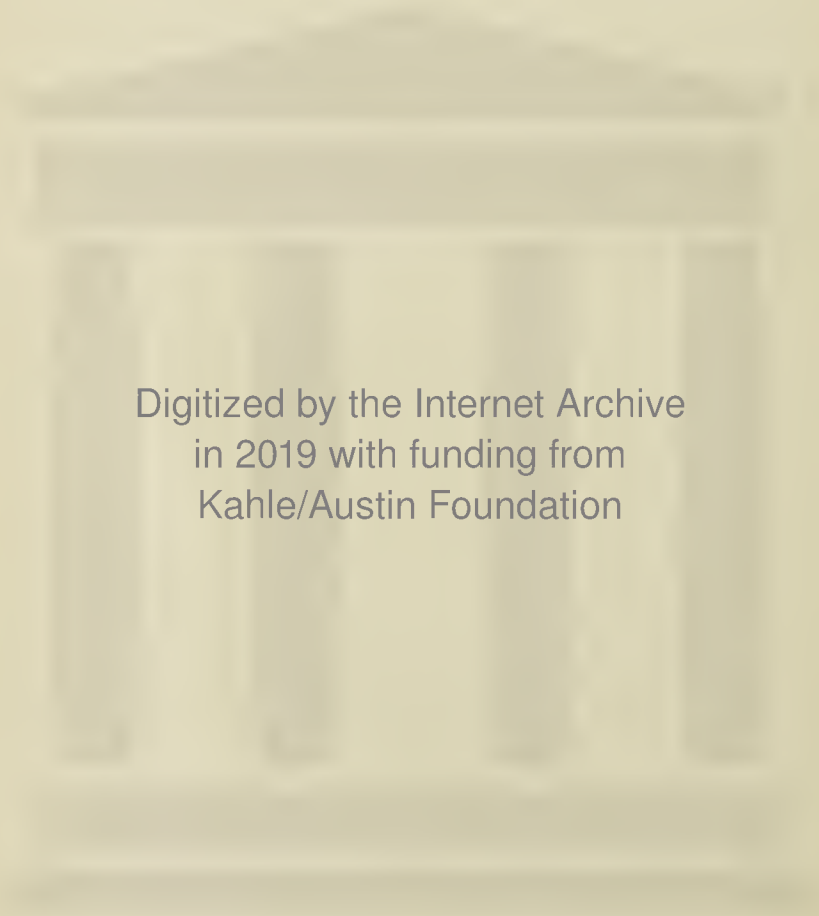
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THE SISTERS JEST AND EARNEST



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*The*  
SISTERS JEST AND  
EARNEST

By PRINCIPAL MAURICE HUTTON

PRINCIPAL EMERITUS OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, TORONTO, AND  
PROFESSOR OF GREEK. SOMETIME SCHOLAR OF WORCESTER  
COLLEGE AND FELLOW OF MERTON COLLEGE, OXFORD  
Author of "The Greek Point of View," "Many Minds,"  
"All the Rivers Run into the Sea"

σπουδῇ τε ἅμα μὴ ἀμόνσῳ καὶ τῇ  
τῆς σπουδῆς ἀδελφῇ παιδίᾳ.

*With scholarly seriousness and with  
the jesting which is seriousness' sister.*

PLATO'S SIXTH LETTER.

TORONTO  
THE MUSSON BOOK COMPANY  
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DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF

RUTH HUTTON

**I** DEDICATE this book to the memory of the ablest and most thoughtful woman whom I have intimately known.

Like the other half-dozen women of my family whom I have known well and loved best, she was Martha and Mary in one : ever cumbered with much serving like Martha, ever quick to choose the better part and listen to the words of thought or inspiration when serving time was done or reasonably foregone. The old antithesis between Mary and Martha, vital and real as it has been in a thousand cases, disappears to-day in the lives of the best women.

She fought a good fight against sickness in the two last months of her life : and she kept the faith in a very real sense : faith in her own sense of truth, as it was given her to see the truth. Such faith was necessarily, in this age of intellectual revolution, when all faiths are in the melting-pot, not precisely identical with the apostolic truth, as St. Paul saw it : but it was her own and sincere, which is all that can be fairly asked of anyone.

Victorians brought up in another atmosphere were often during the last ten years unable to see eye to eye with her : once even, to my sorrow I remember it, I challenged the Georgian faith or lack of faith as "pose," then and only then she became indignant at my lack of charity, at my suspicion of her "posing" :

the suspicion was quite unjust : a score of recollections made me soon aware of this. No one was quicker than she to cover with a mantle of charity every person whom she met, of both sexes (or of all three sexes, academic and clerical people constituting a third sex), of all ages, and of all classes, in whom her intuition discerned, more quickly than I could, sincerity and truthfulness and good intentions.

Old men and women belonging to an era of thought outworn and quite unlike her own : women and servants and poor women clerks, hard pressed to make a bare livelihood : young children of old-fashioned creeds, whose creeds childish at once but very ancient appealed to her and found immediate and sympathetic response, so that she became an ideal guide and spiritual mother to them : young men fresh from modern Oxford breathing the wistful and tentative attitude to life which modern Oxford breeds ; each and all found in her a friend and companion able to understand and sympathize : emphatically "modern" herself, she repelled no one who was honest and sincere ; keeping for herself meanwhile all the religion that she could with honesty and sincerity keep : until it dawned at last upon my hide-bound Victorian dullness, that we never disagreed after all, except in "opinion" : which in this insoluble world amounts to less than nothing.

Her thoughts and opinions were wide as the winds of doctrine which in this age blow us to and fro : but her charity and sympathy and unselfishness were just as wide : or she would hardly have died in her prime : I mean that while she spared almost every one in her judgments, she never spared herself in "serving" : but interpreted her duty to "serve" very strictly and very straitly : theoretically, as a good Georgian, she demurred to the Victorian doctrine that daughters should be sacrificed to their parents



and elders : in practice no one was more tender to console and cheer and amuse the aged derelicts of whom senile decay—the most dismal and discouraging of all stumbling-blocks in the believers' path—has made a holy show.

She spared in her judgment even things that seemed to a Victorian the mere fads and fancies and frills of a luxurious and self-indulgent age : she spared doctrines that to old-fashioned minds appear rash and presumptuous : from Eugenism and Euthanasia and birth-control down to the cults of the beauty-parlour people, and the manicures, and mannequins.

With the words Eugenism and Euthanasia one is recalled to Plato on the one hand, and to the Epicureans and Stoics on the other : these two latter sects, disagreeing in other respects, agreed not seldom—sometimes with humble and grateful hearts to an inscrutable fate, which had given them a longer and a warmer welcome to this cold world than they had ever deserved—in enacting a voluntary and deliberate leave-taking of life : so soon as old age or sickness or mere loss of interest in the course of things had obscured the sun.

Lucretius, best of Epicureans and also best of Stoics, expressed this feeling best : the mood has had revivals in every age and not least in this : it will become much more common and general, if Georgian desperation—sometimes masquerading as a “good time”—should, as seems natural to suppose, hereafter increase. (There is always the subtle and heavenly name as well as the superficial and earthly nickname for things.)

But we are not really returning, of course, as closely as we may seem to be to the *status quo ante Christum* : for after all, Christ has evoked a respect, reverence and love for Himself and His God, for faith, hope and charity, for poverty, chastity and obedience, which

are almost universal : these things presumably must lift desperate and hopeless spirits not seldom above the mere coldness and callousness of Pagan suicide.

Even in regard to the passing craze of Georgian young people for erotic literature and studies in erotomania it is easy to see that the dangerous fad emanates from the large measure of innocence and ignorance still adhering to the readers : the curiosity natural to youth, and youthful prurience equally natural, stimulate such reading among *ingénues* and among ingenuous boys : but a real victim of those deadly sins, which, as Burns said (and he must have known) “ destroy all feeling,” if not all intellect also, has no illusions about his own desperate condition : though he may no longer be able to resist it : there is no *joie de vivre*, no zest of life for him, barely a jest with the death-rattle in it, for him, in those sodden horrors : one could as readily believe in the “ joy ” of the *filles de joie* euphemistically so named, after the example of the Euxine and the Eumenides. The penchant for forbidden literature—forbidden by the young people of to-day only to their mothers and grandmothers—is the measure, almost the precise measure, of their ignorance and innocence.

To return to my daughter, she was a Georgian in mind and all that was “ modern ” evoked her large charity : she often shocked an old Victorian, but after all he had something better than Victorianism to build upon, when he reflected that to those who love much, and love every one but themselves, much is forgiven.

Furthermore, she never talked of her academic efficiency or blazoned it abroad : she took the best honours in Oxford in the department of English, having a keen sense for literature, as the late Sir Walter Raleigh testified when he gave her a “ first-class ” for her style and flair for language and literature, in



spite of a certain weakness in technical details and in the minutiae of Anglo-Saxon : but her father said more about it, though little enough, than she did.

She did good service for the Trade Department of the Foreign Office during the war, when she was quartered in London and prepared private reports, which Ministers of the Crown recognized gratefully and warmly commended. On the other hand, the London episode tried her health sorely : and twice she suffered from pleurisy : and probably incurred then the seeds of the weakness which attacked her again fatally some twelve years later. When she returned to Canada she became Secretary of the Committee on Industrial Fatigue of the Ontario Board of Health : where she collected from the scientific papers of the world a very adequate and accurate report on "Lead Poisoning" : it was much praised and valued and is still to-day valued and praised in the appropriate, and highly technical, circles which it addressed : her own comment upon it was characteristically dry and humorous : "there is not a word in this report to call a blush to the cheek of modesty or a smile to the lips of humour."

Subsequently she made a collection of the letters of factory girls seeking advice on their business problems : and annotated them in order that the poor young things might better realize what proportion of their poor salaries should be spent on their clothes, on their meals, on their lodging : how best they could meet the crucial problem, the almost insoluble problem of occasionally getting a warm bath in a cheap boarding-house : some of the letters which appeared in the collection seemed to me singularly happy in their turn of phrase and their English : when I said as much I found occasion to suspect sometimes that the editor had not taken a First-Class in Honours in English for nothing. But she did not

let her left hand know what her right hand wrote ; the doctors for whom she worked became her valued and warm friends, and will miss her almost as much as I do.

A dedication, especially a dedication of unreserved praise and affection, is apt to be suspect : it is conjectured that it is either insincere flummery, part of the art of flattery which is so deeply embedded in the habits of the age : or ignorance and simplicity, verging on the ridiculous more than on the sublime. I have lived too long in this sick world and in the perusal of multifarious literature, good and bad and indifferent, to retain much ignorance or any simplicity. That I have not written an insincere dedication of the essays that follow I can perhaps best illustrate by the remark that if this little book has any readers and any success with its readers, no success, even though it were much greater than it will be, can now bring to the writer much of the pleasure which his previous books have brought : since she is gone who shared the pleasure : it was her pleasure in his books and in their success—whether the success was due to the style which her loving heart appreciated, or to the matter which his out-of-date Victorian ethics commended to the writer—that was the source and spring of his pleasure therein : it cannot be warmly renewed for him now, though his books should multiply like autumn leaves or flourish like green bay trees. The years have lost their spring.

My daughter had not only the virtues of this age—intellectual honesty and sincerity and the determination to escape from Victorian hypocrisy at all costs (and the escape costs a great deal, for Victorian “hypocrisy” was as often as not only an ugly name for aspiration), but also its foibles : like other Georgian women she smoked cigarettes incessantly : but—in a spiritual sense—she consumed her own smoke : I

mean that she spoke as little of her aches and pains as of her good work in Oxford or in the Trade Department of the Foreign Office.

To these virtues of the age add courage : perhaps courage rather should head the list.

To face the desperate creed of the early Georgian era and the sensational suggestions of Hardy and of Housman that the world is an accident or a " dud " : or the slip of a prentice God, soon realizing his poor workmanship but forgetting to scrap it (like a foreign vivisector with his victims), requires, I imagine, more courage than to face, after the old-fashioned way, the prospect of the Day of Judgment and of the fires of Hell : neither of which prospects by the way are specially Christian or recent, but come freighted with the instincts and traditions of classical and pre-classical antiquity.

She whom I am commemorating was never an extreme Georgian : but she was and could not help being the child of the Georgian age—and of such of its negations and unbelief as she could not escape, her mind being so active and so sympathetic with life and with thought—as she found it all around her, and as she breathed it in the circumambient intellectual atmosphere ; an atmosphere which seems to-day even to penetrate to infancy, and to be literally catching like measles. She needed courage, therefore, as the old believers—even if they believed in Hell and trembled—did not, in the same degree, need it ; in *their* terrors conscience and the fear of God were immanent ; over and above any mere fear of torments ; the silver lining to the cloud was in evidence ; there is no silver lining to the dull and empty greyness of the present outlook and to those despairs of intellectual youth, which seem as infectious and as fatal as the physical germs in which the morbid imagination of the age is revelling.

Look at the life of the Master Himself; He never dwelt on the fires that were not quenched or on the worms that died not: but even He, Himself the flower and crown of men, the great rock in a weary land, the restorer of paths to dwell in, the source of faith, hope and love to all the poor and downtrodden and weary and heavy-laden, the only thinker who has ever lightened *their* burdens, and given rest to *their* souls, even He trembled and wavered for a moment, at the thought that He was without God in the world. Even His courage, though it rose above the material pain of crucifixion, did not rise above spiritual pain when for a moment he despaired of the struggle which goodness was making in His heart against the evils of life and against the Prince of the Power of Darkness. If God were not good, or if His Father were not still working ever more with Him in the cause of good, there was nothing left to hope for or to care for in life. He felt like St. Paul in the famous passage of the First Epistle to the Corinthians (xv. 12-34). His terrible despair passed in a moment, as for a moment it came: and hope and faith and conscience prevailed again for Him as through Him they have survived for twenty centuries in the hearts of the meek and humble of all classes, climes and nations.

All the more courage, then, is necessary to-day for such sincere and thoughtful souls as have inherited the perilous and sensational thoughts of the Georgian age, and their Master's second thought and episodic misgivings; without the antidote of their Master's first and third and abiding thought.

When the tyranny of the present fashion of imagination and its flamboyant misgivings are passed over, the world will return to the permanent impulses and instincts, which governed the deepest thought and the best work which the world has seen: "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief" will become once



more the natural and inevitable and almost universal prayer of this travailing and groaning creation.

Meanwhile intellectual honesty and sincerity of mind are all that can be properly asked of life's transitory pilgrims: the life that we have here may not be a mere dream, perhaps, as it sometimes has seemed to philosophers; but it is only an episode on the long climb and the steep ascent of Heaven or even of the lowest of its many mansions and mountain shelters (*μνοαί*, St. John xiv. 2).

I have been descanting at great and tedious length on the special courage necessary for the moment for all the children of this age: but all the discussion has been a priori, impersonal and general.

I turn to the more special and individual occasions for courage such as belonged to her to whom I dedicate this book, and to many similar women.

Every soul is solitary: but the educated women of this age have incurred by education an extra portion of solitude which they cannot always call peace.

Many men have been beaten so often at school by their sisters that they prefer to attend old-fashioned universities like Yale, which will not admit the better or at least the quicker half of human intelligence: some of these men may be natural morons with the grace to know it; but though they be not morons they are not yet quick enough to perceive that even in comparison with the cleverer sex they may find a compensatory value in their own masculine patience and doggedness and industry, which are after all almost a synonym, and, at worst, a good substitute for the feminine "genius" of intuition.

The clever women accordingly, who often best appreciate both children and child-like men (the large majority of men) for various reasons do not always marry: they prefer to join the ranks of those spiritual mothers—nursemaids, governesses and teachers—who

often do better for their children after the spirit (like Lord Shaftesbury's poor nursemaid whose poor watch he carried religiously to his last days) than the mothers after the flesh do for their very fleshly children : or, if they do marry, they will less often, in direct ratio to their small numbers, add to the total of those happy marriages (a very small fraction at the best, one perhaps out of every ten or twelve marriages) which are women's best and happiest mission, and go some way to redeem this crazy, hastily marrying society.

Whence of course the crusade and propaganda of the Eugenists (to return again for a last brief moment to those sanguine Platonic spirits); they know that only by a crusade and energetic propaganda can they ever hope to persuade men to marry their hand-picked brides : they know that men do not listen willingly to their scientific lectures or bother about posterity, as they would have them to bother.

And after all men have some reason at least for not listening. Plato started Eugenics and a scientific-mating committee, as he started everything that men talk about to-day ("There is no sort of rubbish or nonsense," as the refrigerating Oxford don said, "which you won't find in Plato"), but he has not yet converted even all the Greek scholars and Platonists.

I remember that Grant Allen, for instance, who was both Greek scholar and biologist, as well as nearly my contemporary at Merton College, demurred to Plato's committee, and to the select Board of the British Association, which represents to-day Plato's marriage-makers : Grant Allen thought that even Dame Nature, first and greatest of all match-making mothers, for all her haste and recklessness and her reliance upon those forces of juxtaposition and propinquity, which belong to an earlier and illiterate society and are now *démodés*, can yet, at the best, make better marriages

out of human instinct and shrewdness and even out of mystic promptings of love at first sight (which bulk so large in Mary Webb's stories) at any rate when ebastened and restrained by self-knowledge and self-control : yes, and can " arrange " a larger number of " marriages made in Heaven " as Plato impudently called his very artificial couplings, devised by cold-blooded pedants and myopic scientists, than the British Association will ever contrive.

But, anyhow, the cleverer virgins with the lighted lamps mate less often than their foolish and lampless sisters : even if they mate more often happily when they mate : and hence again their special need of courage for their often very solitary and in a sense frustrate lives.





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A WORD of introduction. Some years ago—I think in 1922—I read in the *Toronto Globe*, which has the largest circulation of any morning paper in Ontario—with me—that my valued colleague, Professor Wrong, would lecture on the Peace Conference in Washington and that I should follow—I am trying to keep my “woulds” and “shoulds” correct, a hard matter in Toronto—with “Alice in Wonderland.” And some people asked, is this a stroke of sardonic wit in Professor Wrong or of cynicism in Professor Hutton? or can it even be a rare stroke of subtle humour on the part of the *Globe*. And a few of them, when that idea occurred to them, added academically, “O si sic omnia.” But it was none of the three, just a piece of nonsense on the part of the Committee organizing these lectures, as a fitting introduction to Lewis Carroll.

If I quote a good deal in this essay it is, I think, appropriate to my subject: as the old lady remarked after hearing *Hamlet*, that she had had no idea before that it was so full of quotations, so perhaps there are here also in this audience a few persons, belonging to the present generation of course, who hardly realize that Lewis Carroll’s books, also, are already full of quotations. Here, for example, is one from *Alice through the Looking Glass*:

“Here I am,” cried a voice from the soup tureen and Alice turned again just in time to see the Queen’s broad good-natured face grinning at her for a moment over the edge of the tureen before she disappeared “in the soup.”

Many of you have heard that phrase "in the soup" often, and have taken it for American humour; rather it is Carrolean humour: it is all subsequent to the date of *Alice*, and even those other stale old American jests about mothers-in-law draw some of their circulation and popularity from Tottles' song in *Sylvie and Bruno* [Part II, page 248]. I shall *not* quote it: it is a poor thing and *not* my own. It is, however, like most jests good or bad, classical Greek: *κῆδος* in classical Greek has two meanings: it means equally sorrow-and-tribulation *and* one's wife's relations. Many of you again use the word "chortle" now: chortle is Carrolean, and dates from *Alice through the Looking Glass* (p. 184).

There is one peculiarity about these books with which I shall start. Humour and pathos since Homer's time have generally gone hand-in-hand, though the pathos may have been sometimes, as in Dickens's case, quite uneven and unequal to the humour, and overdone. In Lewis Carroll, however, though the humour is everywhere, the chief pathos lies in the circumstances of the author's mind and not in his work. It seems rather pathetic, I mean, that this delicate humorist who added so much to the gaiety of the nation, himself tired over-soon of humour, and lost prematurely his gaiety, and became a rather striking example of the ancient doctrine illustrated by Virgil and Wordsworth and other great masters of literature, that the literary man is rarely a good critic of himself and is rarely conscious himself when he is making literature and when he is murdering it.

Catullus, for example, took up the pages of the historian Volusius and dropped them very soon with the phrase "*Annales Volusi, cacata charta*": which some one has paraphrased "*Leaves: Walt Whitman or privy-chamber papers*"; a hendecasyllable quite

appropriate to Walt. Volusius apparently fancied himself unduly.

Virgil again is said to have fancied himself as a philosopher and to have meditated burning for philosophy's sake his mere poems. And Wordsworth—an English Virgil—never apparently could distinguish between the two voices which we heard from his poems: the voice of inspiration and the other voice which R.K.S. has defined as the voice of “an old half-witted sheep”: between the sonnet to London or the song at the fest of Brougham Castle or the Solitary Reaper on the one hand, and the other verses about Peter Bell or the anecdote for fathers or Goody Blake and Harry Gill.

Even so the author of *Alice* was rarely able to keep properly distinct his twofold personality: the literary personality of Lewis Carroll and the commonplace personality of the Rev. Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, the mathematical and devout don, the senior student of Christ Church, Oxford. As he grew older and the grasshopper became a burden and desire failed and the springs of fun and laughter dried up within him, he did not himself “dry up” in authorship, as he should have done, but allowed Dodgson to encroach on Carroll and stray into Carroll's books. Hence the rather depressing moralizing of *Sylvie and Bruno*: it was the work of his later and decadent years: it is often, therefore, hard to say whether it is Lewis Carroll or Charles Dodgson who is speaking.

It looks, e.g., like a sublime stroke of humour that when Her Majesty of happy memory, diva Victoria, wrote to him for his works, to Lewis Carroll, Christ Church, Oxford, he should have sent her his mathematical luenbrations. It was *very* humorous, but perhaps was not so intended. Even this, it may be, was rather a stroke of donnish severity, and an academic rebuke to an intruder.



This man, I mean, was apparently more than most of us a man of two minds in separate compartments. Officially he was a shy, stiff, reserved don and mathematical lecturer, but in his leisure hours and with little girls, especially with little Alice Liddell, he was a playful humorist, and story-teller : he deliberately excluded the public from his playful side and wrote his children's books anonymously. The don in him resented, as Sir Walter Scott resented, any attempt to penetrate behind his anonymity. He was annoyed when admirers addressed letters to "Lewis Carroll, Christ Church, Oxford" : they should have been addressed, c/o Macmillan & Co., publishers, London : these are the sacred places of literature where the profane public has no right to intrude and raise the veil : the sacred places where anonymity, it has even been argued, may be protected, if need be, at the cost of a lie. Lewis Carroll did not lie ; like Washington he could not, but he severely snubbed the intrusive Queen by sending her his official works on mathematics ; poor dear lady : she must have found even the solemn and severe Mr. Gladstone more entertaining : though he talked to her—she said—"as though she were a public meeting." Lewis Carroll would not even give the Queen his autograph : he said that he only gave it to very young ladies.

Our own University Library, by the way, has played a somewhat similar jest upon its readers. You looked up Lewis Carroll in the author catalogue and you found his name but were referred to Charles Dodgson : disappointed and surprised you turned to the unknown Dodgson, only to find the list of his impossible books on mathematics. And yet the University Library exists for literature as well as for useful (or useless) learning. This lecture of mine, I hasten to add, has cancelled that stroke of academic

pleasantry and pedantry : other people have recently—since the *Globe* advertised me—indignantly demanded “ Alice ” at the University Library and have refused to be put off with stones and serpents, with thorns and thistles, when they were asking for bread and fishes, for figs and grapes. And so “ Alice ” also is now there in that second wonderland, and through those other glass doors : and here is a thing that has happened since. A dear old lady, a friend of mine, seeing that I was to lecture on “ Alice ” went to the Public Library and demanded the book : she returned it in less than a day with the comment : “ I have read it all : there is not one word of sense in it.”

Good has come out of evil : it is the one solid service to the University which I have achieved by this lecture. Let it be counted to me for righteousness.

To return to Lewis Carroll.

If only Lewis Carroll had maintained the absolute-ness of separation between Carroll and Dodgson to the end ! but the devout churchman in him would not down (it will not down in me, you will see before this lecture is over) ; and so as laughter and health failed, and they failed early (before he was sixty years of age) not unnaturally for this lonely and clerical and mathematical don ; as nonsense became unnatural and impossible, instead of lapsing into silence (or mathematics), as a wiser man would have done, he allowed his newer sermonizing and elderly self to invade that lighter and more youthful and more genial self, which was also his only genius, and to mingle itself with his books for children, and to wellnigh spoil *Sylvie and Bruno*. (I have split an infinitive there, thank Heaven : I love them : they are very Greek.)

That was rather pathetic, was it not ? And now

to come to Alice. A little girl between seven and twelve is in my experience the most delightful object on this dubious and chequered earth (I meant that when I wrote it, but I am not sure about it now : since I became a grandfather I have sometimes thought that an infant (boy or girl) between seven weeks and seven years old was perhaps even more delightful than a little girl of seven years) and Alice made us see it, if we were too blind to see it of ourselves before ; as Barrie also made us see in *Dear Brutus* (especially when Miss Helen Hayes acts the child). It even seems a pity almost that the development of young women cannot be arrested at this perfect age and stage : the half is greater than the whole : and let no one suspect here a cynicism : I am quoting *Through the Looking Glass*, p. 261. And Alice is never cynical.

"In that case we may start a fresh conversation," said Humpty Dumpty, "and it's my turn to choose a subject—('He talks about it just as if it was a game,' thought Alice) so here's a question for you : How old did you say you were ?"

Alice made a short calculation and said, "Seven years and six months."

"Wrong," Humpty Dumpty exclaimed triumphantly, "you never said a word like it."

"I thought you meant, how old *are* you," Alice explained.

"If I'd meant that, I'd have said it," said Humpty Dumpty.

Alice did not want to begin another argument, so she said nothing.

"Seven years and six months," Humpty Dumpty repeated thoughtfully, "an uncomfortable sort of age. Now if you'd asked my advice I'd have said 'Leave off at seven' : but it's too late now."

"I never ask advice about growing," Alice said indignantly.

"Too proud ?" the other inquired.

Alice felt even more indignant.

"I mean," she said, "that one cannot help growing older."

"ONE can't perhaps," said Humpty Dumpty, "but two can : with proper assistance you might have left off at seven."



There is the doctrine, ancient, simple, true. Girls should leave off growing older at seven—instead of at twenty-seven—Don't misunderstand me, ladies and gentlemen : I am not meticulously stickling or pedantically higgling for twenty-seven as the age when young women cease to grow older : not at all : I only chose twenty-seven to balance Humpty Dumpty's seven : but I am aware that it is not their only or even perhaps their general choice : perhaps : the general choice is rather for twenty-five. The age commemorated as woman's choice by the poet Crabbe, in some lines I find quoted from him by Professor Quiller-Couch.

We had a sprightly nymph : in every town  
Arc some such sprites who wander up and down.  
She had her useful arts and could contrive  
In time's despite to stay at twenty-five.  
“ I stay,” quoth she, “ move on, thou lying year ;  
This is my age : and I will rest me here.”

But even at seven and a half Alice is all right. We lay down *Sylvie and Bruno* with quite a different taste in the mouth : a taste nothing like as pleasant. Sermons of course in themselves are all right, if inspired by genius : but the sermons in *Sylvie and Bruno*, when all the genius of the preacher was for fun and nonsense and for nothing else, and no better fitted for sermon-writing than any of the rest of us, are only an occasion for the sons of Belial (or Balliol) to scoff, and a scandal and a stumbling-block to all the humorists who loved Lewis Carroll, and a disappointment, I suppose, to the children who succeeded little Alice Liddell as his little friends and companions : but I have met children who contradicted me.

Poor Lewis Carroll ! He began by making fun of the Duchess who was always searching for morals, and he ended in *Sylvie and Bruno* by searching for

them himself. I prefer the Duchess's moralizing. Here is some of it (*Alice*, pp. 110-113).

She had quite forgotten the Duchess by this time and was a little startled when she heard her voice close to her ear : " You're thinking about something, my dear, and that makes you forget to talk. I can't tell you just now what the moral of that is, but I shall remember it in a bit."

" Perhaps it hasn't one," Alice ventured to remark.

" Tut, tut, child ! " said the Duchess. " Everything's got a moral, if only you can find it." And she squeezed herself closer up to Alice's side as she spoke.

Alice did not like her keeping so close to her ; first, because the Duchess was very ugly, and, secondly, because she was exactly the right height to rest her chin on Alice's shoulder, and it was an uncomfortably sharp chin. However, she did not like to be rude, so she bore it as well as she could.

" The game's getting on rather better now," she said, by way of keeping up the conversation a little.

" 'Tis so," said the Duchess ; " and the moral of that is ' O 'tis love, 'tis love, that makes the world go round.' "

" Somebody said," Alice whispered, " that it's done by everybody minding their own business."

" Ah well ! It means much the same thing," said the Duchess, digging her sharp little chin into Alice's shoulder as she added, " and the moral of that is ' Take care of the sense and the sounds will take care of themselves.' "

" How fond she is of finding morals in things," Alice thought to herself.

" I daresay you're wondering why I don't put my arm round your waist," said the Duchess after a pause ; " the reason is, that I'm doubtful about the temper of your flamingo. Shall I try the experiment ? "

" He might bite," Alice cautiously replied, not feeling at all anxious to have the experiment tried.

" Very true," said the Duchess ; " flamingoes and mustard both bite and the moral of that is ' Birds of a feather flock together.' "

" Only mustard isn't a bird," Alice remarked.

" Right as usual," said the Duchess ; " what a clear way you have of putting things ! "

" It's a mineral, I think," said Alice.

" Of course it is," said the Duchess, who seemed ready to agree to everything that Alice said ; " there's a large mustard-mine near

here. And the moral of that is—‘The more there is of mine, the less there is of yours.’”

“Oh I know,” exclaimed Alice, who had not attended to this last remark, “it’s a vegetable. It doesn’t look like one, but it is.”

“I quite agree with you,” said the Duchess, “and the moral of that is—‘Be what you would seem to be,’ or if you’d like it put more simply, ‘Never imagine yourself not to be otherwise than what it might appear to others that what you were or might have been was not otherwise than what you had been would have appeared to them to be otherwise.’”

“I think I should understand that better,” Alice said very politely, “if I had it written down ; but I can’t quite follow it as you say it.”

“That’s nothing to what I could say if I chose,” the Duchess replied in a pleased tone.

“Pray don’t trouble yourself to say it any longer than that,” said Alice.

“Oh, don’t talk about trouble,” said the Duchess. “I make you a present of everything I’ve said as yet.”

But, after all, perhaps this may be said for his moralizing vein, that if his humour had not decreased with age and experience of life, it might have *increased*, as with some other humorists (like Swift, and Gilbert and Mark Twain) at the expense of his reverence, his other salient quality. It would hardly have stood still, in stable equilibrium with his reverence : but if it *had increased* at the expense of his reverence, we should have had, no doubt, better literature from him in his later years, but his character would not have gained but lost ; there is no necessary connection between high character and good literature. “The people who write good literature”—as Plato observes—“are sometimes very queer creatures, not to say bounding blackguards.” His wit and humour would have increased at the expense of his reverence, and with such increase might have come almost a disgust for hope and for faith and its foibles : with such increase might have come a sort of gusto for launching shafts against faith in all its forms, against

democracy, for example, and demagogism and socialism and communism and the other grotesque garbs in which Faith is wont to masquerade at all times, but especially in the present age. And after that it is but a step for the humorist, to a warfare against *all* enthusiasm: that dubious quality, that debatable land: enthusiasm: a reproach to our eighteenth-century ancestors: the condition of all virtue to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The wit and humorist, I mean, the satirist and cynic, seem at last to become but one man with four names: one man who has little more definite to say to us than (after Talleyrand), *Sur tout point de zele*—"above all things, gentlemen, no enthusiasm, I beg of you." Cf. Mark Twain, "Every man who reaches forty is either a pessimist or a fool," and I suppose it was Mark Twain who coined the phrase so common since—"a cheerful idiot." Only idiots are cheerful, he came to think. From this *dénouement* and from the fate of Swift and Gilbert and Mark Twain and other humorists Lewis Carroll at least was saved, when his humour experienced an early decline and almost wasted away to its death-bed in *Sylvie and Bruno*, while his reverence for human nature—which seemed to him to partake of the divine nature—remained and even increased.

I knew once, by the way, another mathematical lecturer who was more moderate in his reverence and his moralizings. He kept a cask of special beer, which he called "sermon beer," wherewith to refresh himself on Sundays after morning service. He does not live in Ontario, of course (or in the U.S. I ought now to say), or he would be dead of Ontario (and of the U.S.): in point of fact he is dead: but he did not die of Ontario, or of beer, or of sermons, but of a disease called phlebitis: which is a learned Greek word, and does not mean what the name might



seem to imply, in our more prosaic and realistic tongue.

So Lewis Carroll, to return again to him, was the opposite of the poet Whittier. Whittier was only a poet when he wrote hymns : the best in the language. Lewis Carroll only contributed to literature when he wrote nonsense : and ceased to contribute when he tried to edify and to write sermons.

So much for the pathos of the man and his fate, and now I turn again from his poor sermons to his gems of literature.

He had a sound instinct for words. Here is a part of the scene, where Alice suddenly begins to grow abnormally large (*Alice*, p. 12).

“ Curiouser and curiouser,” said Alice : she was so much surprised that for the moment she quite forgot how to speak good English. “ Now I’m opening out like the largest telescope that ever was : good-bye feet : oh my poor little feet, I wonder who will put on your shoes and stockings for you now, dears : I shall be a great deal too far away to trouble myself about you : you must arrange the best way you can.”

“ But I must be kind to them,” thought Alice, “ or perhaps they won’t walk the way I want to go. Let me see : I’ll give them a new pair of boots every Christmas.” And she went on planning to herself how she would manage it. “ They must go by the carrier’s cart,” she thought, “ and how funny it’ll seem sending presents to one’s own feet : and how odd the direction will look—Alice’s right foot, Esquire, Hearthrug, near the fender, with Alice’s love, etc.”

“ Curiouser and curiouser ” is good, just as “ mobled Queen ” is good. Even though it be, as all other good modern jests are, an imitation of the classics, adapted obviously from Juvenal’s jest “ egregius coenat meliusque miserrimus horum,” it is good none the less. It is better than “ ignoranter ” which is one of Bruno’s adjectives and measures well the relative degrees of excellence of the two books.

There is indeed a *curiosa felicitas* in this comparative adjective "curiouser."

Let us turn to another of the literary devices of Alice, the puns (*Alice*, p. 117).

"When we were little," the Mock Turtle went on at last more calmly, though still sobbing now and then, "we went to school in the sea: the master was an old turtle: we used to call him Tortoise."

"Why did you call him Tortoise if he wasn't one," Alice asked.

"We called him Tortoise because he taught us," said the Mock Turtle angrily, "really you are very dull."

There are several puns also in the mad tea-party scene, as well as much else that is typically Alician and Carrolean: I will read some of it (*Alice*, pp. 80-85, 87, 92).

The table was a large one, but all three were all crowded together at one corner of it.

"No room! no room," they cried out when they saw Alice coming.

"There's plenty of room," said Alice indignantly, and she sat down in a large arm-chair at one end of the table.

"Have some wine," the March Hare said in an encouraging tone.

Alice looked all round the table, but there was nothing on it but tea.

"I don't see any wine," she remarked.

"There isn't any," said the March Hare.

"Then it wasn't very civil of you to offer it," said Alice angrily.

"It wasn't very civil of you to sit down without being invited," said the March Hare. . . .

"Your hair wants cutting," said the Hatter. . . .

"You should learn not to make personal remarks," Alice said, with some severity; "it's very rude."

The Hatter opened his eyes very wide . . . but all he said was, "Why is a raven like a writing desk?"

"Come, we shall have some fun now," thought Alice. "I'm glad they've begun asking riddles." "I believe I can guess that," she added aloud.

"Do you mean that you think you can find out the answer?" said the March Hare.

"Exactly so," said Alice.

“ Then you should say what you mean,” the March Hare went on.

“ I do,” Alice hastily replied, “ at least I mean what I say : that’s the same thing, you know.”

“ Not the same thing a bit,” said the Hatter : “ why you might just as well say that ‘ I see what I eat ’ is the same thing as ‘ I eat what I see.’ ”

“ You might just as well say,” added the Dormouse, who seemed to be talking in his sleep, “ that ‘ I breathe when I sleep ’ is the same thing as ‘ I sleep when I breathe.’ ”

“ It is the same thing with you,” said the Hatter. . . . “ What day of the month is it ? ” he said, turning to Alice ; he had taken his watch out of his pocket and was looking at it uneasily, shaking it every now and then.

Alice considered a little and said “ The fourth.”

“ Two days wrong,” sighed the Hatter. “ I told you butter wouldn’t suit the works,” he added, looking angrily at the March Hare.

“ It was the best butter,” the March Hare meekly replied. . . . The March Hare took the watch . . . then he dipped it into his cup of tea and looked at it again. . . .

“ What a funny watch,” Alice remarked, “ it tells the day of the month and doesn’t tell what o’clock it is.”

“ Why should it ? ” muttered the Hatter : “ does your watch tell you what year it is ? ”

“ Of course not,” Alice replied very readily : “ but that’s because it stays the same year for such a long time together.”

“ Which is just the case with mine,” said the Hatter.

Alice felt dreadfully puzzled. . . .

“ The Dormouse is asleep again,” said the Hatter and he poured a little hot tea on its nose.

The Dormouse shook his head impatiently and said without opening his eyes, “ Of course, of course, just what I was going to remark myself.”

“ Have you guessed the riddle yet ? ” the Hatter said.

“ No, I give it up,” Alice replied : “ what’s the answer ? ”

“ I haven’t the slightest idea,” said the Hatter. . . .

“ I think you might do something better with the time,” she said, “ than wasting it in asking riddles that have no answer.”

“ If you knew Time as well as I do,” said the Hatter, “ you wouldn’t talk about wasting it. It’s *him*.”

“ I don’t know what you mean,” said Alice.

“ Of course you don’t,” the Hatter said. . . . “ I dare say you never even spoke to Time.”

"Perhaps not," Alice cautiously replied, "but I know I have to beat time when I learn music."

"Ah that accounts for it," said the Hatter; "he won't stand beating: now if you only kept on good terms with him, he'd do almost anything you liked with the clock. For instance, suppose it were nine o'clock in the morning, just time to begin lessons: you'd only have to whisper and hint to Time, and round goes the clock in a twinkling: half-past one, time for dinner." . . .

"That would be grand, certainly," said Alice thoughtfully, "but then I shouldn't be hungry for it, you know."

"Not at first perhaps," said the Hatter, "but you could keep it to half-past one as long as you liked." . . .

"Suppose we change the subject," the March Hare interrupted, yawning: . . . "I vote the young lady tells us a story."

"I'm afraid I don't know one," said Alice. . . .

"Then the Dormouse shall," they both cried . . . and they pinched it on both sides at once. . . .

"Once upon a time there were three little sisters," the Dormouse began . . . "and their names were Elsie, Lacie and Tillie: and they lived at the bottom of a well——"

"What did they live on?" said Alice, who always took a great interest in questions of eating and drinking.

"They lived on treacle," said the Dormouse, after thinking a minute or two.

"They couldn't have done that, you know," Alice gently remarked, "they'd have been ill."

"So they were," said the Dormouse, "very ill." . . .

So she went on, "But why did they live at the bottom of a well?"

"Take some more tea," the March Hare said to Alice very earnestly.

"I've had nothing yet," Alice replied in an offended tone, "so I can't take more."

"You mean you can't take less," said the Hatter: "it's very easy to take more than nothing."

"Nobody asked your opinion," said Alice.

"Who's making personal remarks now?" the Hatter asked triumphantly.

Alice did not quite know what to say, so . . . she turned to the Dormouse and repeated her question: "Why did they live at the bottom of a well?"

The Dormouse again took a minute or two to think and then said: "It was a treacle well."

"There's no such thing," Alice was beginning very angrily, but



the Hatter and the March Hare went “Sh! Sh!” and the Dormouse sulkily remarked: “if you can’t be civil, you’d better finish the story for yourself.”

“No, please go on,” said Alice very humbly . . . “I dare say there may be *one*.”

“One indeed!” said the Dormouse . . . “and so these three sisters were learning to draw, you know——”

“What did they draw?” said Alice.

“Treacle,” said the Dormouse, without considering at all this time. . . .

Alice did not wish to offend the Dormouse again: so she began very cautiously: “But I don’t understand, where did they draw the treacle from?”

“You can draw water out of a water well,” said the Hatter, “so I think you could draw treacle out of a treacle well—eh, stupid?”

“But they were in the well,” Alice said to the Dormouse, not choosing to notice the last remark.

“Of course they were,” said the Dormouse. “Well in.” This answer so confused poor Alice, that she let the Dormouse go on. . . .

“They were learning to draw,” the Dormouse went on. . . . “They drew all manner of things—everything that begins with an M——”

“Why with an M?” said Alice.

“Why not?” said the March Hare.

Alice was silent.

The Dormouse . . . went on “that begins with an M such as mousetraps and the moon and memory and muchness—you know you say things are ‘much of a muchness.’ Did you ever see such a thing as a drawing of a muchness?”

“Really now you ask me,” said Alice, very much confused, “I don’t think——”

“Then you shouldn’t talk,” said the Hatter. . . .

She got up in great disgust and walked off. . . . The last time she saw them, they were trying to put the Dormouse into the teapot.

There is virtue in a pun in spite of this degenerate age which has lost the gift for tasting the bouquet of puns, as it has lost the gift of tasting the bouquet of wines! Lewis Carroll, by the way, was very proud of his gift for tasting this latter bouquet also. He was even appointed to choose the contents of the

Christ Church wine cellars. I am making some of you feel thirsty : here is a recipe for thirst from the *Looking Glass* (p. 200).

"I am so hot and thirsty," said Alice.

"I know what *you'd* like," the Queen said good-naturedly, taking a little box out of her pocket : "You'd like a biscuit"—

But one has to be middle-Victorian, with a vivid memory of cracknels, to taste the full flavour of that offer : it has a flavour, believe me, with the memory. However, Alice took her biscuit and ate it as well as she could. . . .

"Have another biscuit," said the Queen.

"No thank you," said Alice, "one's quite enough."

"Thirst quenched, I hope," said the Queen. Etc.

To return from biscuits to puns : I am well aware that the literary art of Lewis Carroll is largely punning and is out of date. Wit and humour have their fashions like everything else, and his wit and humour are mid-Victorian, have had their day and ceased to be. But then there are some mid-Victorians still left, even in this hall : still doddering on somehow, and they like puns because they like Lewis Carroll, or because they are the puns of Sophocles or Æschylus or Shakespeare : "How is it with aged Gaunt ?" asks King Richard II, and the aged John of Gaunt replies :

"O how that name befits my composition !  
 Old Gaunt indeed and gaunt in being old :  
 Within me grief hath kept a tedious fast :  
 And who abstains from meat that is not gaunt ?  
 For sleeping England long time have I watched ;  
 Watching breeds leanness, leanness is all gaunt ;  
 The pleasure that some fathers feed upon  
 Is my strict fast : I mean my children's looks ;  
 And therein fasting hast thou made me gaunt :  
 Gaunt am I for the grave : gaunt as a grave."

And Shakespeare was only following Æschylus, who condescends to pun with Helen's name :

*Ἠλένη : ἑλένας : ἑλανδρος*

Helen too truly named : the Nell of ships and men.

And Æschylus was followed by Sophocles in his play of Ajax : that name which in Greek is *Αἶας* and in the vocative case something like *αἶαϊ* which being Englished means “Alas.”

Alas, Alas (says Ajax) who would have thought my name  
Would ever chime so true with my estate ?

And if Æschylus, Sophocles and Shakespeare have not weight enough with this perverse and crooked generation, I will go higher and will remind you of the text

Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my church.

Even our Saviour was content to pun in playful and tender fashion over the name of poor weak lovable Peter, and to turn him into a rock : and a rock he at last became.

Lewis Carroll would not have quoted that last text perhaps ; *he* might have thought it irreverent : but even if such reverence be overstrained, a foible of the ecclesiastic conscience, let it at least stand in defence of Lewis Carroll, that his whole being, even his puns have Christian authority behind them and are steeped in the Christianity of the mid-Victorian age.

And now good-bye to puns as Herodotus would say : I turn to other Carrolean devices : some readers like the pure nonsense of fictitious and factitious words : they never forget the poem in the *Looking Glass*—

Twas brillig and the slithy toves  
Did gyre and gimble in the Wabe  
all mimsy were the borogoves  
and the mome raths outgrabe, etc.

This is the poem which introduces the now popular

word "chortle," and some scholars like Mr. Vansittart of Cambridge, have turned the whole poem with conscientious accuracy into Latin elegiacs as the surest sign that it has made its mark, and also as the best insurance that it will continue to live even after our fluid and flatulent American language is forgotten; just as the other Greek scholar turned Dickens into Greek prose to ensure his perpetuity. Dickens, by the way, needed that insurance; the English original is already wellnigh unknown to the students of the first year in the University of Toronto. I quoted recently to a class in Livy from the *Pickwick Papers*, "Miss Bolo went home in a bath chair and a flood of tears," to illustrate the classical idiom of zeugma; the look of helpless perplexity which spread over the faces of the class when I spoke of Pickwick and Miss Bolo showed me that I might just as well have quoted from Livy himself.

Possibly Lewis Carroll owed more to the classics than most of you imagine; I have at home several photographs of an old and very soiled and torn Greek MS. which I brought with me from Athens in 1910. It appears to contain Greek originals of most of the stanzas of "The Walrus and the Carpenter."

The sun was shining on the sea,  
Shining with all his might :  
He did his very best to make  
The billows smooth and bright—  
And this was odd, because it was  
The middle of the night.

The moon was shining sulkily,  
Because she thought the sun  
Had got no business to be there  
After the day was done—  
"It's very rude of him," she said,  
"To come and spoil the fun."

The sea was wet as wet could be,  
The sands were dry as dry.

You could not see a cloud, because  
No cloud was in the sky.  
No birds were flying overhead—  
There were no birds to fly.

The Walrus and the Carpenter  
Were walking close at hand :  
They wept like anything to see  
Such quantities of sand ;  
“ If this were only cleared away,”  
They said, “ it would be grand.”

“ If seven maids with seven mops ”  
“ Swept it for half a year,”  
“ Do you suppose,” the Walrus said,  
“ That they could get it clear ? ”  
“ I doubt it,” said the Carpenter,  
And shed a bitter tear.

“ O oysters, come and walk with us,”  
The Walrus did beseech ;  
“ A pleasant walk, a pleasant talk,”  
“ Along the briny beach ” :  
“ We cannot do with more than four,”  
“ To give a hand to each.”

\* \* \* \* \*

But four young oysters hurried up,  
All eager for the treat :  
Their coats were brushed, their faces washed,  
Their shoes were clean and neat—  
And this was odd, because, you know,  
They hadn't any feet.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Walrus and the Carpenter  
Walked on a mile or so,  
And then they rested on a rock  
Conveniently low :  
And all the little oysters stood  
And waited in a row.

“ The time has come,” the Walrus said,  
“ To talk of many things,”



“Of shoes—and ships—and scaling-wax—”  
 “Of cabbages—and Kings”—  
 “And why the sea is boiling hot—”  
 “And whether pigs have wings.”

“But wait a bit,” the Oysters cried,  
 “Before we have our chat”;  
 “For some of us are out of breath,”  
 “And all of us are fat.”  
 “No hurry,” said the Carpenter:  
 They thanked him much for that.

“A loaf of bread,” the Walrus said,  
 “Is what we chiefly need”:  
 “Pepper and vinegar besides.”  
 “Are very good indeed—”  
 “Now if you’re ready, Oysters dear,”  
 “We can begin to feed.”

“But not on us!” the Oysters cried,  
 Turning a little blue;  
 “After such kindness that would be”  
 “A dismal thing to do.”  
 “The night is fine,” the Walrus said,  
 “Do you admire the view”?

“It was so kind of you to come”  
 “And you are very nice.”  
 The Carpenter said nothing but  
 “Cut me another slice,”  
 “I wish you were not quite so deaf,”  
 “I’ve had to ask you twice.”

“It seems a shame,” the Walrus said,  
 “To play them such a trick”:  
 “After we’ve brought them out so far”  
 “And made them trot so quick.”  
 The Carpenter said nothing but  
 “The butter’s spread too thick.”

“I weep for you,” the Walrus said,  
 “I deeply sympathize.”  
 With sobs and tears she sorted out



Those of the largest size,  
Holding her pocket handkerchief  
Before her streaming eyes.

“ O Oysters,” said the Carpenter,  
“ You’ve had a pleasant run,”  
“ Shall we be trotting home again ? ”  
But answer came there none :  
And this was seareely odd, beecause  
They’d eaten every one.

- 1 ἔθαλπε κύμαθ' ἥλιος,  
καὶ ταῦθ' ὑπερφυῶς·  
ὥς πάντα μηχανώμενος  
ξυσθῆναι παντελῶς·  
οὐ μὴν ἀλλ' ἄτοπον τόδ' ἦν·  
νῦξ ἐμέσου τέως·
- μῆνη δὲ δυσφοροῦσα καὶ  
Φοίβῳ λέγουσ' ἀράς,  
“ ὅδ' ” εἶπε “ πολυπραγμονεῖ ”
- 10 “ παρὼν ἀφ' ἡμέρας.”  
“ ὦ νηλὲς ἥλι' ὅς γ' ἐμέ ”  
“ παίζουσιν οὐκ εἴς.”
- ὑγρὰν θάλασσαν καὶ ψάμμον  
αὐτῆς ξηροτάτην  
τῇδ' ἦν ἰδεῖν· ἀλλ' οὐ νέφος·  
νέφος γὰρ οὐ παρῆν·  
ὑπερθεὺς δ' ἐποτῶντ' ὄρνεις·  
πλήν γ' ὅτι πᾶς ἀπῆν.
- ἡ φώκη χά τέκτων δμοῦ  
20 στείχοντε τὴν ὁδόν,  
ἔκλαιον κάρθ' ὀρῶντε τῆς  
ψάμμου τὸ χρῆμ' ὅσον·  
εἰπον δ' ὥς, ἥδ' ἂν φροῦδος ἦ,  
πρᾶγμ' ἔσται τρυφερόν.
- “ θεὸς ἔπτα κορὰς ἔπτα νιν ”  
“ κορήμασιν ” ἦ δ' ἦ  
“ κορούσας μῆνας ἔξ, σκόπει ”  
“ ἂν οὕτως ἀποστῇ.”  
“ οὐδ' ὥς εἶκ' ἐμοί γ'· ” ἦ δ' ὅς  
30 κεῖς δάκρυ' ἐτάκη.

ἡ φώκη δ' οὖν τάδ' ἤρξατο  
 τοὺς κόγχους προστρέπειν·  
 “οὐχ ἡδὺ παρὰ θῖν' ἀλός,”  
 “κογχοι, περιπατεῖν”;  
 “δὲς δύο χεῖρας ἔχομεν,”  
 “τοσοῦτους ὥστ' ἄγειν.”

οἱ δ' εὐθὺς ἐπτοημένοι  
 σπεύδουσι τέσσαρες,  
 40 νέοι γ', ἐκάστῳ δ' ἦν χιτῶν  
 πρόσωπόν τ' εὐπλυνές  
 καὶ δὴ πέδιλα· πῶς γὰρ οὐ;  
 οὐ μὴν ἐνῆν πόδες.

ἐντεῦθεν ἐξηλαντέην  
 πλεῖν ἕκτον στάδιον·  
 ἕως ἰκέσθην χθαμαλήν  
 πέτραν ὀνήσιμον·  
 ἐνταῦθ' ἐμεινάτην, κόγχους  
 τάξαντ' ἐναντίον.

ἡ φώκη τότε “ὦρα μὲν ἦδ'”  
 50 ἦ δ' ἡ “πολλοῖς πέρι”  
 “περιφρονεῖν· βλάνταις, ναύταις”  
 “καὶ γῆ σημαντρίδι”  
 “τὴν θ' ἄλλα τί ζεῖ καὶ τὴν ὕν”  
 “εἰ χρῆται πτέρυξι.”

“ἐπίσχες δ'” εἶπον οἱ κόγχοι  
 “πρὸ λέσχης· ὥς ἡμῖν”  
 “τοῖς μὲν πέφυκεν ἄσθμα, τοῖς δ'”  
 “εὖ πιμελῆς ἔχειν.”  
 60 ἔστεργον δὲ τὸν τέκτονα  
 λέγοντ' ἐλινύειν.

ἡ δ' εἶπεν “ἄρτον ἂν μάλιστ'”  
 “ἔχοντ' ὀναίμεθον.”  
 “εἴτ' ὄξεως καὶ πεπέρεως”  
 “μὴ καὶ δεώμεθον.”  
 “νῦν δ'—εὖ γὰρ ἐσκεύασθ' ὕμεῖς”—  
 “δαιπνεῖν ἀρχώμεθον.”

οἱ δ' ἐπόρφυρον κἀβόων  
 “ μὴ δῆθ' ἡμᾶς φάγης.”  
 “ στυγνὸς τόδ' εἴη θριγκὸς ἄν”  
 70 “ τοσαύτης ἀρετῆς.”  
 “ ἦ νῦξ” ἦ δ' ἦ “ καλῶς ἔχει”  
 “ ἄγασθέ που τῆς γῆς.”

“ πολλὴν δὴ τὴν εὐφροσύνην”  
 “ γευόμεθον ὑμῶν.”  
 ὁ τέκτων σιγῶν τᾶλλ' ἔφη  
 “ δὸς ἔτι μοι τόμων.”  
 “ ἦσθην ἄν εἵπερ ὧτ' ἔχοις,”  
 “ ὥς δις σὲ ταῦτ' αἰτῶν.”

ἦ δ' εἶπε “ μὴ οὐκ ἀστεῖον ἦ”  
 80 “ τάδ' αὐτοὺς ἀπατᾶν”  
 “ ἄλλως τε καὶ πόδας κάτα”  
 “ πέμπαντε καὶ μακράν.”  
 ὁ τέκτων σιγῶν τᾶλλ' ἔφη  
 βούτυρον ῥεῖν ἄγαν·

“ ἄλλ' οὖν” ἦ δ' ἦ “ συμπάσχω σφιν.”  
 εἰποῦς' ἀνέστενεν·  
 στένουσα τοὺς παχυτάτους  
 κόγχων κατέπιεν·  
 90 πιοῦσα γ' ἀπεμύττετο  
 καὶ δάκρυ' ἔστεγεν·

ὁ δ' οὐ σίγῶν ἔθ' “ ἔν' γ'” ἔφη  
 “ κῶλον δεδρόματ' εὔ”  
 “ βούλεσθ' ἵωμεν θᾶτερον;”  
 οἱ δ' εἶπον οὐδε γρῦ·  
 τί καὶ γρύζοι τις ὅς γ' οὐδ' ἦν,  
 ἐδεσθεῖς ἀντικρὺ;

All of you have recognized, as you see the Greek I have brought from Athens, the close parallelisms here even in minute details between the Greek and English, or “ is the butter spread too thick ? ” Here come some other poems from *Sylvie and Bruno*. I

have scoffed a little at *Sylvie and Bruno*, but there are things to remember even there; the late Sir William Osler—Sir Billy as his innumerable Canadian friends knew him—both humorist and Greek scholar, was fond of quoting some of the verses of which I am setting before you what I like to fancy are their Greek originals: all from *Sylvie and Bruno*. Sir William liked the song of the three Badgers, especially the third verse:

The mother herring on the salt sea wave  
Sought vainly for her absent ones,  
The father-badger, writhing in a cave,  
Shrieked out, "Return my sons."  
"You shall have buns"—he shrieked—"if you'll behave,  
Yea, buns and buns and buns."

(*Sylvie and Bruno*, first pt., p. 248.)

Personally I prefer these other eight poems, which are in my old MSS. book in the Greek which I like to think is their earliest form. They are the gardener's poems in *Sylvie and Bruno*.

He thought he saw a banker's clerk  
Descending from a bus;  
He looked again, he saw it was  
A hippopotamus.  
"If this should stay to tea," he said,  
"There won't be much for us."

He thought he saw a coach and four  
Which stood beside his bed;  
He looked again, he saw it was  
A bear without a head.  
"Poor thing," he said, "poor silly thing,  
It's waiting to be fed."

He thought he saw an elephant  
That practised on a fife;  
He looked again, he saw it was  
A message from his wife.  
"At last I realize," he said,  
"The bitterness of life,"

The English there, of course, is only a paraphrase ; the Greek dates evidently from the heyday of Attic comedy, when the comedians aimed their shafts at Euripides, the mystic and the theosophist among the Athenian dramatists. Realistic and local and national touches like these cannot well be preserved in a modern English version.

ὄρᾱν τοκιστὴν ἐδόκει  
βαίνοντα κατ' ὄχον·  
παπτήνας ἀνεγνώρισεν  
ἵππον ποτάμιον·  
“ εἰ τοῦτο γ' ” εἶπε “ δειπνῶ ”  
“ οὐδ' ἔσται λείψανον.”

τέθριππον ἄρμ' ἔδοξ' ὄρᾱν  
παραστὰν οἱ λέχει·  
παπτήνας ἀνεγνώρισεν  
ἄρκτον· κρᾶτ' οὐ δ' ἔχει·  
“ φεῦ ” εἶπ' “ ἐλεινοῦ θρέμματος ”  
“ φορβὴν περιμένει.”

ἔδοξεν ἐλεφανθ' ὄρᾱν  
ἀσκοῦντ' αὐλητικὴν·  
παπτήνας ἀνεγνώρισεν  
γυναικὸς σκυτάλην·  
“ νῦν οἶδ' ” ἔφη “ ’Ευριπίδη ”  
ὥς κατθανεῖν τὸ ζῆν.”

Well, to continue :

He thought he saw a kangaroo  
Which worked a coffee mill ;  
He looked again, and found it was  
A vegetable pill.  
“ Were I to swallow this,” he said,  
“ I should be very ill.”

ἔδοξ' ὄραν τραγέλαφον  
μύλης ἐπ' εὐχεροῦς·  
παπτήνας ἀνεγνώρισεν  
βρόχθους ἰατρικούς·  
“ πiónτι τούσδ' ” εἶπ' “ ἔσται μοι ”  
“ τοῦ νοσεῖν πυραμοῦς.”



You should notice that Lewis Carroll has obscured from you by his paraphrase the very ancient Athenian slang, which still is going strong on this continent but dates from Aristophanes, about "taking the cake"; living in England, Lewis Carroll did not know that "taking the cake" was still vernacular English on this side after twenty centuries about. Now come the next four poems of the same gardener.

He thought he saw a buffalo  
Upon the chimney piece;  
He looked again, he saw it was  
His sister's husband's niece.  
"Unless you leave this house," he said,  
"I'll send for the police."

He thought he saw a rattlesnake  
Which questioned him in Greek;  
He looked again and found it was  
The middle of next week.  
"The one thing I regret," he said,  
"Is that it cannot speak."

By the way, *this* rattlesnake also has wished a hundred times in the last few days that it was the middle of next week. You can all adapt the last two lines easily enough to your present feelings.

ὄρᾱν βοάγρον ἐδόκει  
ἐπιβάτην ἱπποῦ·  
παπτήνας ἀνεγνώρισεν  
νυὸν ἀνεψιοῦ·  
"ἄπαγέ σύ γ'" εἶπ' "εἰ δὲ μὴ,"  
"τοὺς Σκύθας εὐλαβοῦ."

ἔδοξε καὶ δράκονθ' ὄρᾱν  
Ἑλληνικῶν ἵδριν·  
παπτήνας ἀνεγνώρισεν·  
ἦν αὐτὸ πέρυσιν·  
"ἐν" εἶπε "τούτου μέμφομαι"  
"τὸ κωφὸν εἶναι νιν."

ἔδοξ' ἐν κήπῳ κλεῖν ὄρᾱν  
 ἀνάπτυχον πυλῶν·  
 παπτήνας ἀνεγνώρισεν·  
 ἦν κύκλα τετράγων'·  
 “ἐμοί γ’” ἔφη “τάδ’ ἦν καὶ πρὶν”  
 “σαφέστατ’ ἀνθ’ αὐτῶν.”

ἔδοξ' ὄρᾱν γρουπάετον  
 λύχνῳ περιπετῇ·  
 παπτήνας ἀνεγνώρισεν·  
 βύβλω γλᾶυξ ἐκόπη.  
 “φείδου τῆς νυκτός·” εἶπε “σοί”  
 “κατάρρουν μὴ φέρῃ.”

He thought he saw a garden door  
 That opened with a key ;  
 He looked again and found it was  
 A double rule of three.  
 “And all its mystery,” he said,  
 “Is clear as day to me.”

He thought he saw an albatross  
 That fluttered round the lamp ;  
 He looked again and found it was  
 A penny postage stamp.  
 “You’d best be getting home,” he said,  
 “The nights are very damp.”

Even if these poems be plagiarism from the lost Athenian comedians of the Euripidean age, I suggest that it is good plagiarism. Next comes “You are old, Father William,” with its Greek antitype. I have ventured to correct the Greek of my MS. by the addition of one letter ; the omission is no doubt a copyist’s error but it spoils a gender (*Alice*, p. 53).

“You are old, Father William,” the young man said,  
 “And your hair has become very white.”  
 “And yet you incessantly stand on your head”—  
 “Do you think at your age it is right ?”

"In my youth," Father William replied to his son,  
 "I feared it might injure the brain,"  
 "But now that I'm perfectly sure I have none,"  
 "Why, I do it again and again."

"You are old," said the youth, "as I mentioned before,"  
 "And have grown most uncommonly fat":  
 "Yet you turned a back-somersault in at the door":  
 "Pray, what is the reason of that?"

"In my youth," said the sage, as he shook his grey locks,  
 "I kept all my limbs very supple"  
 "By the use of this ointment, one shilling the box,"  
 "Allow me to sell you a couple."

"You are old," said the youth, "and your jaws are too weak"  
 "For anything tougher than suet,"  
 "Yet you finished the goose, with the bones and the beak":  
 "Pray, how did you manage to do it?"

"In my youth," said his father, "I took to the law":  
 "And argued each case with my wife":  
 "And the muscular strength which it gave to my jaw"  
 "Has lasted the rest of my life."

"You are old," said the youth: "one would hardly suppose"  
 "That your eye was as steady as ever":  
 "Yet you balanced an eel on the end of your nose,"  
 "What made you so awfully clever?"

"I have answered three questions and that is enough,"  
 Said his father: "don't give yourself airs,"  
 "Do you think I can listen all day to such stuff?"  
 "Be off, or I'll kick you downstairs."

*"γέρων εἶ πατὲρ" εἶπε τις ἡβασκων  
 "πολιὸν τὸ κάρα παρέχει·  
 "καὶ ὅμως ἐπὶ κρατὶ κυλίνδει ἔχων"  
 "ὅ γε τηλίκῳ οὐδὲ πρόπει."*

*ὁ πατὴρ ὑπελάμβανε "πάλαι ἐγὼν"  
 "νοῦν ἔτρεσα μή τι πάθῃ."  
 νῦν νοῦν γε σύνοιδά μοι οὐδέν' ἔχων."  
 "πράττω οὖν ὅποταν ἐπίῃ."*

“ γέρων εἰ πατὲρ ” εἶπε “ δις αὐτὸ λέγω.”  
 “ καὶ τιμελῇ ἄσπετα ρεῖς.”  
 “ ἐκυβίστας ὁμῶς ὀπίσω κατὰ δῶ.”  
 “ ταῦτ’ εἰπέ μοι ἅττα νοεῖς.”

“ χρίομαι ” (ἀνεχαίτισε τὰς πολιὰς)  
 “ ἀπὸ παιδὸς ” ἔφη ὁ παλαιός·  
 “ ἄγε σοὶ κονίας ἀποδῶμαι ἐμάς; ”  
 “ ἀλάστρος ὅδ’ ὀβολιᾶιος.”

“ γέρων εἰ πατὲρ ” εἶπε “ σύ γ’, ὥστε μόνου ”  
 “ δημοῦ γνάθος ἂν σοὶ ὄναιτο.”  
 “ λέγε χῆνα καὶ ὁστέα ῥύγχει ὁμοῦ ”  
 “ πῇ βροχθίσαι ἄρτι δύναιτο; ”

ὁ δ’ ἔφη “ νέος ὢν γὰρ ἀγῶν’ ἐτίθην ”  
 “ τῇ γυναικί μοι ἀντιδικεῖν,”  
 “ καὶ ἐλεπτολογοῦμεν· ἀφ’ οὗ ἀπέβην ”  
 “ γναθμόν ὥστε κρᾶτιστον ἔχειν.”  
 [MS. has γνάθον].

“ γέρων εἰ πατὲρ ” εἶπε “ τὰ δ’ ὄμματα σοί ”  
 “ καταστῆναι ἔτ’ οὐδὲ θεμιστόν.”  
 “ τίς ἂν ἐγγέλων ἄλλος ἐν ῥυνὶ φέροι; ”  
 “ τί μαθῶν τόδε δρᾷς ἀλόγιστον; ”

ὁ δ’ ἔφη “ τρία γοῦν ἀποκέκριθ’ ἄλις.”  
 “ οὐ μὴ τάδε σχηματιεῖ; ”  
 “ οὐδ’ ἐστὶ σχολή μοι ὑθλεῖν τετράκις.”  
 “ σὲ τραχηλιῷ εἰ μὴ ἀπεῖ.”

There is one more stanza of the gardener's song which is authentic, but which is separated by a whole book and more from the other stanzas, and therefore I only disinterred it recently; however, it is so curiously appropriate to the present moment when the eddies of black smoke have recently ceased curling up from the Vatican that I will repeat it, with the Greek from which it is rather happily paraphrased.

He thought he found an argument  
 That proved he was the pope ;  
 He looked again and found it was  
 A bar of mottled soap.  
 "A fact so dread," he faintly said,  
 "Extinguishes all hope."

λόγους ἔδοξεν εἰδέναι  
 ὥς αὐτος εἶη Πάν·  
 παπτήνας ἀνεγνώρισε  
 κονίαν βάλλαν·  
 "τὸ χρῆμα τοῦτ' " ἔφη μεγ' ὄν  
 "ἀπῆλπισε μ' ἄγαν."

Some of these stanzas which you have heard are from *Sylvie and Bruno*, and the last stanza is from the second part of *Sylvie and Bruno* which I have barely quoted. You already know the reason: *Alice in Wonderland* was his first and best book; the next book, *Alice Through the Looking Glass*, was the next best; but I agree with the little girl who said, "I have read both Aliees; I think *Through the Looking Glass* is stupider than *In Wonderland*, don't you?" I do. I think the nonsense is farther fetched and less natural, but either Aliee is better than *The Hunting of the Snark* and the two *Sylvies* or *Rhyme and Reason*.

And yet when all the world was young, before the war, I found I could extraet pleasure from the nonsense of *Through the Looking Glass*, yes, and even from the second *Sylvie*. For example, take this passage of *Through the Looking Glass* which tells of Alice and the frog (p. 325).

Alice turned round upon the frog, ready to find fault with anybody.

"Where's the servant whose business it is to answer the door?" she began.

"Which door?" said the frog.

Alice almost stamped with irritation, at the slow drawl in which he spoke.



“ This door, of course.”

The frog looked at the door with his large dull eyes for a minute, then he went nearer and rubbed it with his thumb, as if he were trying whether the paint would come off ; then he looked at Alice.

“ To answer the door,” he said. “ What’s it been asking of ? ”

He was so hoarse that Alice could scarcely hear him.

“ I don’t know what you mean,” she said.

“ I speaks English, doesn’t I,” the frog went on, “ or are you deaf ? What did it ask you ? ”

“ Nothing,” Alice said impatiently. “ I’ve been knocking at it.”

“ Shouldn’t do that, shouldn’t do that,” the frog muttered. “ Wexes it, you know.” Then he went up and gave the door a kick with one of his great feet. “ You let it alone,” he panted out, as he hobbled back to his tree, “ and it’ll leave you alone, you know.”

Or even from this nonsense in *Sylvie and Bruno*, Part II (p. 153).

“ How far have you come, dear ? ” the young lady persisted to Sylvie.

Sylvie looked puzzled.

“ A mile or two, I think,” she said doubtfully.

“ A mile or *three*,” said Bruno.

“ You shouldn’t say a mile or three,” Sylvie corrected him.

The young lady nodded ; “ Sylvie’s quite right ; it isn’t usual to say a mile or three.”

“ It would be usual, if we said it often enough,” said Bruno.

It was the young lady’s turn to look puzzled.

“ He’s very quick for his age,” she murmured ; “ You’re not more than seven, are you, dear ? ” she said aloud to Bruno.

“ I’m not so many as that,” said Bruno. “ I’m one. Sylvie’s one ; Sylvie and me is two. Sylvie taught me to count.”

“ I wasn’t counting, you know,” the young lady laughingly replied.

“ Hasn’t *oo* learned to count ? ” said Bruno.

The young lady bit her lip.

“ Dear me, what embarrassing questions he does ask,” she said in a half audible aside.

“ Bruno, you shouldn’t,” Sylvie said reproachfully.

“ Shouldn’t what ? ” said Bruno.

“ You shouldn’t ask that sort of question.”

“ What sort of question ? ” Bruno mischievously persisted.

"What she told you not," Sylvie replied, losing her sense of grammar in her confusion.

"*Oo* can't pronounce it," Bruno triumphantly cried, and he turned to the young lady for sympathy in his victory. "I knewed she couldn't pronounce umbrella-sting."

The young lady thought it best to return to the arithmetical problem.

"When I asked if you were seven, I didn't mean how many children, I meant, how many years."

"Only got two ears," said Bruno; "nobody's got seven."

Sometimes beneath the nonsense there is some slight academic point, some scintilla of scientific criticism of the English language or of its grammar and idiom.

Here, e.g. (*Alice*, p. 25), is a fair score off our grammar and idiom which appeals to classical scholars; the classics never show these weak spots in their use of the word "it." And here is another from *Sylvie and Bruno*, Part II, a book which I have only contrived to quote twice before: a criticism of our idioms, more subtle, perhaps less sound; I commend it to my colleagues in English. (*Sylvie and Bruno*, Part II, p. 234.)

(Sylvie is telling a story and Bruno is listening.)

"And Bruno went down the hill and when he got to the brook he saw the lamb sitting on the bank, and who should be sitting by it but an old fox."

"Don't know who *should* be sitting by it," Bruno said thoughtfully to himself, "A old fox *were* sitting by it."

If I go on now to say something of the private character and career of this humorist, it is of course rather because we instinctively desire to know something of the personality of good writers than because we can expect to find them living up to the genius of their books. Few have done so. Sir Walter Scott perhaps in his manful fight against debts and bailiffs—a fight all the more manful because old age was already sapping his genius, when he needed it most to

pay his bills—Sir Walter Scott emerges greater in his decay, greater in character, I mean, than in the heyday of his prime ; but his is a rare case. People idolized Dickens also and not less naturally, but they found themselves unable sometimes to idolize him as unreservedly, after they had had the misfortune to meet him privately and to discover his taste, shall we say, in clothes and watch chains ; the gentleman did not measure up to the humorist ; just as Kipling the man, the journalist, seems an inadequate reflection of Kipling the poet.

The devotees of Tennyson again—a very numerous band—sometimes saw reasons wistfully to doubt whether so great a poet should make such a pother when the salmon was not served with the right sauce ; the fellow-traveller with Lowell on ocean steamers complained sometimes of a certain want of condescension in the American for the comfort of his fellow-passengers under those trying conditions.

If Browning and Charles Lamb and Miss Austen and Arthur Clough escaped these criticisms it was because each was so typically English as to remember always that he was a man or she a woman, before either of them was a genius ; and therefore resolutely to keep manhood and womanhood before them as their true personality, and to forget the mere author, whose genius was impersonal, outside their true selves, blowing like the wind they knew not whence nor whither. Compare Miss Austen and her dinner party : she refused to dine out as the authoress of *Pride and Prejudice* or with people who did not want her for herself.

Other exceptions no doubt there are, such as Longfellow and Southey, but in their case the exception seems to prove the rule : they were amiable and admirable altogether in private life and needed no halo of poetry to help them, because after all they *were*

primarily simple gentlemen of private life who had tried also, without conspicuous success, to add poetry to their natural gifts. What was it Goldwin Smith used to say of Longfellow's poems? Longfellow! barley water!

But Coleridge? Coleridge, who had tried and succeeded in the same great rôle of poet, had fallen down in the simpler rôles of husband and father and honest man, and when he left his family to be supported by Mr. Gilman and other friends, he almost provoked comparison with his spiritual brother, Rousseau himself, that classic and crucial example of the literary man and philosopher, who has discarded even the commonest virtues and has reached an éminence equally bad and equally good, as the thinker who fashioned the thoughts of Europe, and the father who consigned his children to a foundling hospital. Compare, too, Godwin and Leigh Hunt, who sponged on Shelley and Byron.

It is not surprising, then, that Charles Dodgson is less interesting than Lewis Carroll. Not that there is any flagrant inequality in the two lives of the man and the author—far from it; only that the man seems to have been a rather conventional and over-scrupulous clergyman, who carried the asceticism of the intellect to a point somewhat unusual even in a religious age, and quite contrary to the spirit of the present day, when nevertheless—by one of Nature's usual paradoxes—the asceticism of the intellect has become for the first time not merely defensible but urgently necessary to our salvation.

Lewis Carroll was so scrupulous, I mean, so ascetic in his control of his intellect, that he would print nothing which seemed to him even remotely and indirectly irreverent; he was going, e.g., to introduce the passion-flower into Alice's dream-garden, as a flower in a passion, when some one reminded him of



the origin of the name ; he promptly substituted tiger-lilies. I am a little surprised after this to hear that when a friend of his who drove a tandem and had nearly killed therewith an Egyptian pasha one day visiting Oxford, repeated the attempt next day with himself, he permitted himself to quote the Old Testament and ask, “ Wilt thou slay me also, as thou slewest the Egyptian yesterday ? ” He was so scrupulous, so ascetic of intellect, that he begged a friend not to report to him any of the stories which are always current and often amusing, about the theological speculations of children. “ These may not be irreverent stories,” he said, “ for the children whence they are taken ; they *are* irreverent for the grown-ups and should not be repeated ” ; but he allowed himself, I am glad to add, to send to *Punch* the story of the little boy who listened to the tale of Lot’s wife, and then asked : “ And where does all the rest of the salt come from, that is not made of ladies ? ”

Ah well ! After all, even with all this intellectual asceticism so keenly developed in him, if he were alive to-day he might plead ample justification. It would be justified in topsy-turvy looking-glass fashion, after the event ; first the asceticism and then fifty years later the cause and need and justification of it ; to-day when the uncontrolled use of the scientific intellect threatens civilization, and even humanity itself, with a sudden and awful end through fever germs and bombs, poison gas, submarines, and aeroplanes, if ever a second world-war should follow the first, to-day the asceticism of the intellect, the duty of regulating the use of the mind and the play of intellect by moral scruples, a duty for fifty years derided as a foolish fancy of fastidious churchmen, begins to wear a quite different aspect, begins to present itself as the most crying need of the hour,



as the first necessity for our self-preservation. Look at Washington and its recent conference; so after all, ladies and gentlemen, please observe that I *have* succeeded at last, even against my expectations, in connecting Wonderland and Washington. I might have dwelt at equal length on the misuse of opium and morphia and heroin, all of which cry out for the asceticism of the intellect: and remember too that the original Cochrane discovered the use of mustard gas before 1815, but the British Government would not use it: it was not used till 1915, when the Germans began the use of it.

To return to the Carrolean scruples: naturally again, though he revelled in the *Merchant of Venice* he was shocked by Shakespeare's crude contempt for Jews and still cruder conception of Christianity; he begged Miss Ellen Terry to use her influence with Sir Henry Irving to omit the two out-of-date and mediæval lines in the sentence pronounced on Shylock:

that for this favour  
he presently become a Christian.

The clergyman was too real a Christian not to be shocked by the very material and quite insensitive Christianity of the seventeenth-century dramatist.

Naturally again, Mr. Dodgson as a soft-hearted clergyman had a weakness for the rather painful works of Miss Florence Montgomery; he liked *Misunderstood*; that book which whoso reads must either shield himself with flippant laughter, or melt into effeminate tears: or *Little Meg's Children* and the works of Miss Hesba Stretton.

Naturally he had the same scruples which all laymen had and have still about vivisection; naturally he resisted the progress of natural science in Oxford; not unnaturally, though regrettably, Lewis Carroll

resisted the appointment of the dubious theologian Dr. Jowett to the Regius Professorship of Greek in that university. I like the manner of his resistance better than the matter. “ Let Upsilon [he wrote] = the University. Gamma = Greek and  $\pi$  = Professor ; then gamma pi = the Greek professor ; let this be reduced to its lowest terms and call the result Iota = Jowett ; the problem is to eliminate  $\pi$ .”

There are other mathematical jests of the same kind ; some of them now famous and current everywhere, such as the following : “ Plain superficiality is the character of a speech in which any two points being taken, the speaker is found to lie wholly with regard to these two points.”

“ Plain anger is the inclination of two voters to one another who meet together but whose views are not in the same direction.”

“ When two parties, coming together, feel a right anger, each is said to be complementary to the other, though strictly speaking this is seldom the case.”

“ A surd is a radical whose meaning cannot be exactly ascertained.”

And then follow some mathematical problems.

Problem I. To find the value of a given examiner.

*A* takes in ten books in the final examination and gets a third class. *B* takes in the examiners and gets a second. Find the value of the examiners in terms of books. Find also their value in terms in which no examination is held.

Problem II. To estimate profit and loss.

Example : Given a Derby prophet who has sent three different winners to three different betting men ; and given that none of the three horses is placed ; find the total loss incurred by the three men

(a) in money.

(b) in temper.

Find also the prophet; is this latter problem usually soluble?

You see the origin of Stephen Leacock's delicious boarding-house geometry, but Professor Leacock has bettered his original.

Is it worth while to compare *Alice* as a best seller of the Mid-Victorians with some of the best sellers of to-day? Not of course with the very best sellers. Lewis Carroll never rose to such heights or sank to such depths of popularity as Mr. Hall Caine or Miss Marie Corelli; but let us say, for example, with Sir James Barrie. I like *Dear Brutus*, as I have said, exceedingly; and I like *Her Medals*. I think I should like, if I saw it, *Mary Rose*, and I was not offended by *The Well-Remembered Voice*. Some of my severe academic colleagues denounce these things as they denounce Mr. Chesterton's *Magic*. "These plays are too sentimental," they seem to say, "if they are not taken seriously; if they *are* taken seriously, they are illicit concessions to the craving of a faithless age for a new faith, faith in spiritualism and Raymond and séances and table turning; faith in evil spirits and in the Prince of Darkness."

Lewis Carroll was debarred by his unyielding Mid-Victorian Christianity from exploiting this new faith, this new scepticism and superstition. He would have agreed with Mr. Chesterton probably in his belief in magic, but he would have thought it an unlawful subject for a play, thus to speculate before the public upon very serious and forbidden topics. It is a good measure of the distance we have travelled, since we read *Alice* in our youth, towards hoping all things and believing all things, that is, all things uncanny and morbid.

My severer colleagues are anxious now that the house has been swept and garnished, and the lock turned on the previous tenant, that the seven evil

spirits who are applying for a lease of it be not less rigidly excluded than the former occupant ; but ordinary human nature abhors this academic vacuum, and Sir James Barrie, in *Mary Rose* and *The Well-Remembered Voice*, has exploited this abhorrence.

I cannot lecture on Sir James, as I was asked to do. I am a Mid-Victorian and he is too recent and modern and up to date ; but I think the movement of thought, the scepticism and superstition of which he takes advantage, is natural and inevitable and will not down until it has run its course and ended perhaps—who knows—in the return of the original tenant.

In conclusion, the criticism which I offer and which every reader almost offers of Lewis Carroll, is not that he stuck to his Mid-Victorian atmosphere of faith, but that having a real genius for nonsense, and age and experience having knocked the nonsense out of him, he went on writing nevertheless, and produced books like *Sylvie and Bruno*, only relieved by an occasional revival of nonsense like the gardener's song, from dreary moralizing ; faith alone, after all, is not literature nor a substitute for literature. He had better have stuck it out in silence, like other men ; until the tyranny of present fashions of thought be overpast and the wheel have revolved full circle. Few people, comparatively few, have ever taken very seriously their religious creeds ; have ever realized their meaning. Few people ever will ; but thousands have unconsciously assumed them as facts and have been unconsciously restrained and controlled by them, and when the wheel has gone full circle thousands will do and be the same again. It is all the churches will get, but it is all they need, and it will come : it is bound to come : Darwin won't depress and discourage men's imaginations and men's souls for ever.



I will offer one final observation. When the Great Assize comes and writers and professors are all judged according to that remarkable text, written expressly for their warning, "By your words you shall be justified and by your words you shall be condemned"—the soundest and the justest of texts surely, for the judgment of men who by the law of their being live in words and for words and whose lives go by in the daily selection of words and in the eternal search for *le mot juste*—when the Great Assize comes, I like to imagine that Charles Lutwidge Dodgson will be justified by *Alice*—with a bonus of ten per cent. added to his total of marks perhaps in recognition of his mathematical treatises—and not by his sermons. For the sake of *Alice* his moralizings, I shall suppose, will count nothing against him, will be counted as though they had not been.



WHAT are the distinctions between humorist, satirist, misanthrope, cynic, comedian, and wit?

(1) The humorist is the man who makes play with *contrasts*, either with the contrast between a man's professions and his practice, this is the humorist-moralist: Dickens, Thackeray (who was called a cynic but was not a cynic), Lowell and sometimes Goldwin Smith: or else with the contrast between a man's ideals and the facts and laws of life: this is the humorist-cynic and is more intellectual than moral: the Saturday reviewers: and the other conservative humorists of all ages and times, whom Plato has painted. Gilbert is often, on occasion at least, in this class: as in *The Sorcerer* and *Pinafore* and *Patience*: even Miss Austen is occasionally in this class, but without ceasing to be still a moralist: as in *Sense and Sensibility*: and Cervantes in *Don Quixote*, and Horace with his "naturam furca expelles tamen usque recurret et mala perrumper sensim fastigia [?fastidia] victrix" (fastigia = idealisms, but fastidia = squeamishness and scruples).

(2) The satirist is the man who shows up the seamy side of life, with hatred and horror of it: the satirist is a moralist of the type of Juvenal.

(3) The misanthrope is the satirist "writ large": who hates the seamy side of life and expresses his hatred of it but without hope of altering it: the satirist without the satirist's moral purpose: he is just a "realist" who sees only the seamy side of life and hates life: Swift was a misanthrope.

(4) The cynic is the other man who sees only the seamy side but who laughs at it or scoffs.

The cynic has always been the man who snarled or laughed at what other men valued. Values have changed, and cynics with them. The ancient Greek cynic was a moralist who snarled at what other men put first—wealth, comfort, luxury, civilization : these things are no longer, theoretically at any rate, the first things in life. They have given place to character, conduct, Christianity. The cynic has therefore changed also and is now the man who snarls or laughs at character, conduct, Christianity. He snarls at different objects to-day, that is, but the meaning of the word cynic remains the same : only he is no longer a moralist. The cynic may be a comedian, but all comedians are not cynics.

(5) The comedian is just a mirth-maker : “ What fools these mortals be ! ” is his theme : all comic papers are of this school. They are not necessarily humorists of any school, or satirists or cynics. They need not raise a laugh at what are called “ serious things.” Some do and others don’t : they just raise a laugh. Lewis Carroll was a comedian : but being also very serious, even over-serious, his seriousness and his conscience came into conflict very soon with his love of fun and his love of pun : and ultimately ended that love and that laughter. Every one has met hundreds of other men and women, whose love of fun comes into conflict sooner or later with their tender conscience ; and carries on an interneecine warfare with it. These tender-hearted people think that humour, as Canon Ainger says, should be always sympathetic with human nature and full of reverence for it. Canon Ainger, very properly, though he loves humour, is of two minds about comedians. He does not love Gilbert : there is a great gulf fixed between a good Christian and a mere comedian : just as there is

often a great gulf between good literature and a good man.

(6) Wit, finally, is chiefly verbal and literary. It is the neat expression of some analogy or some contrast. Douglas Jerrold was at once a wit and a cynic when he said, "Are we not all men and brothers? All Cains and Abels?" Goldwin Smith was wit as well as humorist and moralist when he coined his epigram about Patrick Henry: "'Give me liberty or give me death,' cried Patrick Henry—and bought another slave."

These six classes of humorist, satirist, misanthrope, cynic, comedian, and wit, overlap of course and inter-fuse, and a man may belong to more than one class: to which does Aristophanes belong, and to which does Gilbert?

Each perhaps to the very large, very nondescript and vague class of comedians. It seems to be taking them too seriously to call them humorists or satirists or misanthropes or cynics: they are, however, of course not comedians only but also wits.

Gilbert is, I conceive, on the whole neither humorist, satirist, misanthrope or cynic, so much as comedian and wit. He loves to turn everything into laughter; his object is to raise a laugh and nothing more; the mock heroic is generally his line; vivacious persiflage is his forte; banter is his long suit; moralists object to him for this reason: they doubt if he is ever serious.

*Is he ever serious?* I am not sure: there seems to be an approach to serious sentiment in the song of Iolanthe to the Lord Chancellor: almost to pathetic sentiment: a note never before heard in Gilbert and never heard afterwards, unless it be once in *The Yeomen of the Guard*.

Sullivan, at any rate, seems to have thought that there was serious and pathetic sentiment in the song of Iolanthe to the Chancellor: for the music of the song, as a visitor to that opera in Toronto recently

said to me, seemed curiously beautiful and rather out of place. It was church music, said my critic.

You know the song : Iolanthe is pleading with the Chancellor for their love-sick son—

He loves ; if in the bygone years  
Thine eyes have ever shed  
Tears, bitter unavailing tears,  
For one untimely dead,  
If in the eventide of life  
Sad thoughts of her arise,  
Then let the memory of thy wife  
Plead for my boy who dies.

\* \* \* \*

That touch of sentiment and pathos is, I suppose, part of the popularity of these operas. Sullivan apparently would not translate into good music mere persiflage all the time ; he would introduce from time to time sentimental music : the sort of music suited for an ordinary sentimental song and for an ordinary English drawing-room—the English being the most sentimental of nations, or at any rate the most sentimental after the Germans. Gilbert insisted on the serio-comic, on the mock-heroic : his collaborator sometimes drowned the comic-mockery of the words in music which was just sentimental. Phoebe's song in *The Yeomen of the Guard* illustrates this, perhaps :

Were I thy bride,  
Then the whole world beside  
Were not too wide  
To hold my wealth of love,  
Were I thy bride.

\* \* \* \*

Sullivan, in fact, inverted Dr. Johnson's question, " Why should the devil have all the good music ? " " Why should the churches have all the good music ? " asked Sullivan, and introduced church music into comic opera : especially into *The Yeomen* and *Iolanthe* and *Patience*.



I have quoted *The Yeomen* and *Iolanthe* : but the best illustrations come from the best of the operas—*Patience* : there is the song of Patience herself—

Love is a plaintive song  
 Sung by a suffering maid,  
 Telling a tale of wrong,  
 Telling of hope betrayed.  
 Tuned to each changing note,  
 Sorry when *he* is sad,  
 Blind to his every mote,  
 Merry when he is glad.  
                     Love that no wrong can cure,  
                     Love that is always new,  
                     That is the love that's pure,  
                     That is the love that's true.

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*

Or take the delightful song of Lady Jane :

Silvered is the raven hair,  
 Spreading is the parting straight,  
 Mottled the complexion fair,  
 Halting is the youthful gait.  
 Hollow is the laughter free,  
 Spectacled the limpid eye,  
 Little will be left of me  
 In the coming by and by.

\*            \*            \*            \*

The mockery is broad and manifest even before one reaches that parody of English sentimentality “the coming by and by” and the broader farce of the second stanza. And yet the music is pure sentiment. And the antithesis between the words and the music is at its highest and most luminous point. The words seem an affront to the music, just as they do in “The Magnet and the Churn” : “The music is worthy of the best of Heine’s lyrics” (Baring).

I will take one more illustration from *Patience*, to the same effect, another song of hers.



I cannot tell what this love may be  
 That cometh to all but not to me ;  
 It cannot be kind as they'd imply  
 Or why do these gentle ladies sigh ?

\* \* \* \* \*

A few more words about this music of Sullivan. I am not a musician or the son of a musician : only a susceptible outsider who knows what music he likes and who likes music that is fetching and catchy, and generally, as I am told by musicians, thoroughly cheap and trashy. That is the music for me, and I can hear it humming in my ears for some time afterwards : music with a lilt to it, such as " Twenty love-sick maidens we," or " I hear the soft note of the echoing voice of an old, old love long dead " (p. 112), or " Three little maids from school are we " (p. 184), or even, occasionally, some of the music of the great German composers, especially Mendelssohn's music to the second chorus of the *Antigone* " Many are marvels, nothing than man more marvellous happeneth." But there my capacity for music ends, and my candid friends said to me at once that it was absurd for a rank outsider to lecture on Gilbert, for Gilbert involved Sullivan. Very likely they were right. Anyhow, this is not the time or place to wade into metaphysics and philosophy and to ask whether the outsider has a right to his tastes and preferences in music or in poetry or in sculpture or in painting, or, for that matter, in politics either : whether all standards should not be set by the experts and humbly accepted by the vulgar. Sullivan's has been called cheap music because it is popular : but I have read that Ethel Smith, who is a considerable authority on music to-day, has said that " Tipperary," the most popular tune of the war, would have delighted Schubert : and the same verdict applies, Mr. Baring remarks, *mutatis mutandis*, to literature : to *Alice in Wonderland*, to the *Pilgrim's Progress*,

to Gray's "Elegy." All this literature is extremely popular but passes also somehow as first-rate, and is it not first-rate?

The controversy is as old as the hills and more insoluble. Plato is for the experts and he counts with me: but Aristotle is for the vulgar—and *he* counts with me; and no other two men in the world, no nor a wilderness of monkeys count against either of them or at all with me. Let the experts argue it among themselves whether Sullivan's popular music is good music or cheap music: they will probably never agree: meanwhile I can get on with my lecture by concluding that Sullivan will remain the best example in music to be quoted by the Aristoteleans against the Platonists, to show that the popular in art or politics or literature or music may also be the best or nearly the best. I will risk just one musical shot before dropping the musical question: the continued popularity of these operas is due more to Sullivan the musician, than to Gilbert the comedian and librettist: who was also the author of the Bab Ballads and many plays, which are now only "unconsidered trifles." But perhaps it is ungracious to draw any comparisons between collaborators whose collaboration has been the happiest in the history of art: each seems to have inspired the other to his best.

I turn to Gilbert. Gilbert has been called the English Aristophanes: other critics have resented the title as too good or perhaps too bad for Gilbert.

The differences are great: Aristophanes is much broader than Gilbert: broader in every sense: broader in the idiomatic sense: more French than Gilbert. Gilbert wrote for the English, and though he mocked a little at English prudery, no doubt he deliberately preferred English reticence to French breadth, English restraint to French realism. The French call this reticence and restraint hypocrisy.

That is, of course, just a French mistake : they are rather due to that political instinct which is the one great gift of the English people and which the French have never possessed. The Greeks and Aristophanes had none of this reticence because they were never a political success but a political failure. The Romans had something of it and were politically successful. Gilbert must mock occasionally, of course, at English prudery : what comedian does not ? Even Bernard Shaw, the least French of English comedians, allows himself to mock a little. Gilbert's mockery is very mild : things like these in *The Yeomen of the Guard* : the clown Point says :

It's a general rule,  
 Tho' your zeal it may quench,  
 If the family fool  
 Tells a joke that's too French  
 Half a crown is stopped out of his wages, (p. 289)

or better still, in *Patience* (p. 103) :

Then a sentimental passion of a vegetable fashion  
 Must excite your languid spleen,  
 An attachment *à la* Plato to a bashful young potato  
 Or a not-too-too French bean.

Gilbert makes fun of English reticence in these lines, but being an Englishman with the political instinct which keeps a nation sound, he on the whole very carefully observes it. None the less, but all the more that having no conscious philosophy about him, but only a store of common sense, he probably would have explained himself by saying that he made his operas so English and so reticent in order to attract the English and to pacify the Lord Chamberlain. He would probably have repudiated any deeper instinct than that, any even subconscious recognition that it is only by English prudery and hypocrisy (which Englishmen call aspiration) that the seamy side of life can be

reduced to its minimum, and, so far as may be, sterilized: that directly you treat the seamy side frankly, as the Franks do, as Anatole France does, you magnify its seams, you multiply its poisonous germs. In short, you exaggerate the evil (exactly as a romancer exaggerates the good by idealizing his hero) and all the while though calling yourself a realist: a realist forsooth! a realist who has made his so-called realities tenfold larger in stature, and more serious in menace, than they need have been, by his romancing realism. If they are plagued with realism in France it is their own fault. They have magnified the seamy side of life when they should have minimized it. They have treated it romantically and seriously when they should have been silent about it, and so have helped to keep it in the fly-blown and dirty corner where it belongs. It is hard enough to keep it there in all conscience, but it ought to be kept there; and the psycho-analysts, e.g., do no good but much harm in dragging it out. Psycho-analysis is one of the curses and evil signs of this generation which is always seeking after signs and miracles.

Anyhow, whatever be the cause, Gilbert is less broad than Aristophanes in the idiomatic sense. He is also much less broad in a deeper and broader sense. The titles themselves of the two comedians' comedies taken alone, illustrate this. You know Gilbert's titles: nothing in them: except *Patience* with its literary and Shakespearian reference—which is after all conjectural—some of them merely accidental titles: *The Yeomen of the Guard* was meant to be "The Beefeaters": but that seemed too undignified, too popular, to be quite popular with a hypocritical and sentimental people. So another name much less appropriate but more dignified was coined for it: another title also was so dubious to strict conventionality that Gilbert half-repent-ed and debated a



change : I mean from *Ruddigore* to "Kensington Gore" : none of the titles (except possibly *Patience*) have any artistic merit.

Contrast them with the breadth and suggestiveness of the best of Aristophanes' comedies : *The Clouds*—*The Frogs*—*The Wasps*—*The Birds*—*Peace*—*The Pacifist Woman*—*Women in Parliament*—*Women in Church*, etc., etc. There is no modern comedy like these except de Rostand's *Chanticleer* and his *L'Aiglon*. And there is so much in a title. Aristophanes' titles have a wealth of imagination and suggestion in them, and are only open to criticism, if at all, on the ground that they promise too much : that even Aristophanes cannot develop adequately the profound analogy which unites Socrates and all other philosophers with Cloudland, which unites lawyers and lawsuits with wasps, which unites company promoters and their castles in Spain, with Cloud-Cuckooborough and Birdland.

Indeed, if anyone wants to see what can be made of themes so high, perhaps he will have to go beyond Aristophanes himself to a modern adaptation of Aristophanes : certainly not to Gilbert but to Mr. Courthope and his "Paradise of Birds." I am not lecturing on his "Paradise of Birds," but if anyone is curious to see how much can be made out of Aristophanes and his title of "The Birds," let him read the "Paradise of Birds." He will thank me for recalling the existence of that exquisite and half-forgotten adaptation : full of poetry and happy satire with a touch even of imaginative reverence in it, which no one will seek or find in Aristophanes.

But even apart from Mr. Courthope, Aristophanes' titles are full of promise, not wholly belied by the performance.

I was quoting some time back the lines from *Patience* about the not-too-too French bean.



That opera shows Gilbert at his best : full of wit as well as of mockery. Gilbert himself knew that it was his best work. He modestly said it was the best because the music of *Patience* was the best : but was not the music the best because the libretto was the best, and by far the best ? Gilbert shows in *Patience* a genius for mockery, and a genius for the choice of just the right word. What can be better than this description of Bunthorne : the æsthetic *poseur*—the young Mr. Oscar Wilde :

When I go out of door,  
Of damozels a score,  
All sighing and burning,  
And clinging and yearning,  
Will follow me as before.  
I shall with cultured taste  
Distinguish gems from paste,  
And high-diddle-diddle  
Will rank as an idyll  
If I pronounce it chaste.

\* \* \*

Nothing can be better in its way : the lilt of the verses is first-rate : the words exactly suit the sense : and yet they are so far-fetched, so academic, so to speak, as to lift the stanzas quite out of the commonplace. Who could have rhymed Francesca di Rimini with niminy piminy, and greenery yallery with Grosvenor Gallery, except a poet with a Swinburnian gift for jingling rhymes, for rhymes as good as Swinburne in their jingle, and much more full of meaning and significance than most of Swinburne's lines "of sound and fury signifying nothing" ?

This is what makes *Patience* Gilbert's best work : as literature of course I mean, though it be as well, thanks perhaps to the words, the best as music also. It is indeed the only opera which is abiding literature : which has a real subject of serious and permanent interest. It was all very well to mock in *Pinafore* a

First Lord of the Admiralty who had never been on a ship : amusing but cheap and superficial : all very well to mock at the Peers and the Lord Chancellor in *Iolanthe* : amusing but a little cheap : too obvious and easy : to laugh at women's education and women's rights in *Princess Ida* : to laugh at Army and Navy and company promoters and party government in *Utopia*—it is just Punch set to music, and there's an end of it. But *Patience*—though Gilbert hardly knew it and originally did not intend it—is something better and much more academic. It is genuine humour of the cynical kind and illustrates each of the two forms of humour : you know the origin of *Patience*.

There arose in Oxford in the late seventies, through the posing of a clever young Irish poet—Oscar Wilde—and partly through the Greek cult of beauty, practised by William Morris the English Hellenist, and Burne Jones the artist, and the two Rossettis, a hectic and hysterical passion for the æsthetic, the beautiful, which embraced even the dons : at any rate one of the most accomplished of the dons, Mr. Walter Pater. All the men of the movement wore æsthetic ties, peacock blues, sage greens, olive greens, any colour that was not crude but subdued and soft and dreamy. Every woman wore green and yellow garments and clothed her darkened rooms in similar hues : in the language of *Twelfth Night*,

And with a green and yellow melancholy  
She sat like *Patience* on a monument,  
Smiling at grief.

Shakespeare apparently foresaw the movement and Gilbert presumably took the name *Patience* from this passage of Shakespeare, though it suits the twenty love-sick maidens better than it suits the milkmaid : but Gilbert cared nothing for such details : he had

no literary qualms or artistic scruples : he was very crude and impatient.

Apparently he had intended—characteristically enough—something else, something infinitely poorer and cheaper : to write an opera making fun of two rival curates and their devotees and their slippers—the slippers are out of date to-day and are replaced by a bottle of gin—as before he had done in *The Sorcerer* ; something in the vein of *The Sorcerer's* best lines over again, sung by a curate.

Time was when love and I were well acquainted,  
Time was when we walked ever hand in hand,  
A saintly youth with worldly thought untainted,  
None better loved than I, in all the land ;  
Time was when maidens of the noblest station,  
Forsaking even military men,  
Would gaze upon me rapt in adoration,  
Ah me ! I was a fair young curate then. (p. 243).

\* \* \* \* \*

This was apparently Gilbert's first idea for *Patience* : but either because he had done it all already, and done it to perfection, or because some one suggested that religious society might be offended, that English conventionality and hypocrisy or aspiration might be annoyed, he turned from this banal and popular and superficial note, to a real satire on a most unpopular and most academic and far-fetched Oxford "fad." He hardly deserved his subject when it came to him so accidentally and as a *pis aller* : but nevertheless he produced some most amusing patter, almost perfect patter, in *Patience* : and therefore some considerable poetry.

Alice Meynell, herself a dainty and scrupulous poet, called Swinburne "the jingle man" more full of sound than sense, more sensuous than sober ; more full of music than of meaning : and even "The Garden of Proserpine," musical though it be, corroborates her criticism. But in this light raillery of Gilbert's in

*Patience*, sound and sense are perfectly matched and the stanzas are sound philosophy, as well as a first-rate squib. And they smashed the æsthetic fad, if it needed smashing, beyond direct revival. All the soft-headed and sentimental people in Oxford who were looking out for a new religion from the hands of the posing Mr. Wilde were laughed out of their idolatry. We have had the “cubists” since, but they never counted for as much nor were accepted as a religion.

I have been quoting from *Patience*, from Gilbert at his best, but there is good “patter”—that is the usual word and the right word, I think—in the other and inferior operas: in *The Yeomen*: in *Iolanthe*: in *The Gondoliers*: in *The Mikado*: in *Princess Ida*: in *Utopia*. And something even in the yet more trivial operas; in *The Pirates*, in *Pinafore*, in *The Sorcerer* (already quoted), in *Ruddigore*: and—yes, even in *The Mountebanks* (which is by Gilbert though not by Sullivan).

First from *The Yeomen*, the best of the inferior operas. Here is some lyrical patter: the ballad of Fairfax the condemned prisoner.

Is life a boon?

If so, it must befall

That Death whene'er he call

Must call too soon.

Though fourscore years he give,

Yet one would pray to live

Another moon.

What kind of plaint have I

Who perish in July?

I might have had to die

Perchance in June.

(p. 270)

\* \* \* \*

And here is a song of Elsie's, the bride of ten minutes, whose husband, married five minutes ago, is to die in the next five minutes: it is a trifle cynical, not unpleasantly cynical, at the expense alternately of women and of men.



Though tear and long-drawn sigh  
     Ill fit a bride,  
 No sadder wife than I  
     The whole world wide.  
     Ah me, ah me,  
     Yet maids there be  
 Who would consent to lose  
     The very rose of youth,  
     The flower of life,  
     To be in honest truth  
     A wedded wife,  
     No matter *whose* ! (p. 278)

\*            \*            \*            \*

This same opera has the only character in it which almost seems pathetic : which Grossmith at any rate when he acted it made pathetic. Gilbert, like Lewis Carroll, rigidly eschews pathos (warned by Dickens's caricatures of it) : but Grossmith when he played the part of the mediæval jester Point, used the immemorial tradition which belongs to the mediæval jester, and made him pathetic, a pathetic moralist and a weeping and a laughing philosopher at once ; an English Heraclitus and Democritus in one. Here are some of his verses :

I've wisdom from the East and from the West  
     That's subject to no academic rule,  
 You may find it in the jeering of a jest  
     Or distil it from the folly of a fool ;  
 I can teach you with a quip, if I've a mind,  
     I can trick you into learning with a laugh ;  
 O winnow all my folly and you'll find  
     A grain or two of truth among the chaff. (p. 276)

\*            \*            \*            \*

Now come *The Gondoliers*. *The Gondoliers* has some of the best patter of any of the operas : it is mildly political : much milder than Aristophanes : but it ridicules in the vein of Aristophanes democracy and egalitarianism : and adds—as Aristophanes could



not—some lawful jests at the British form of democracy, constitutional monarchy.

Here is the egalitarian patter: the democratic kings are singing:

For every one who feels inclined  
Some post we undertake to find  
Congenial with his peace of mind,  
And all shall equal be. (p. 329)

\* \* \* \*

Admirable, isn't it? And then come the verses poking fun at the rôle of our constitutional kings: our kings who reign but do not rule: who open churches and bazaars and hospitals and orphanages and British Associations and lunatic asylums and Parliaments and other trifles, and at the present time do it so well—both King and heir, both father and son—that it is safe to say that no other two officials of one and the same family throughout the Empire equal them in the fidelity, tact and intelligence with which they discharge their most useful but often tedious duties.

Here is how the *Gondolier* constitutional King describes his morning work:

First we polish off some batches  
Of political despatches  
And foreign politicians circumvent;  
Then if business isn't heavy  
We may hold a Royal Levee  
Or ratify some Acts of Parliament,

\* \* \* \*

Then from *The Mikado*, here are the lines of Koko, awaiting execution:

To sit in solemn silence in a dull dark dock,  
In a pestilential prison with a life-long lock,  
Awaiting the sensation of a short sharp shock  
From a cheap and chippy chopper on a big black block.

(p. 190.)

And here are some lines as well known as any in Gilbert :

My object all sublime  
 I shall achieve in time,  
 To let the punishment fit the crime,  
 The punishment fit the crime,  
 And make each prisoner pent  
 Unwillingly represent  
 A source of innocent merriment,  
 Of innocent merriment.  
 \* \* \* \*

From *Iolanthe*, which makes fun of the Peers, as *The Gondoliers* makes fun of the Bolsheviki, there are good songs : here is one from the Peer in love :

Spurn not the nobly born  
 With love affected,  
 Nor treat with virtuous scorn  
 The well-connected.  
 High rank involves no shame ;  
 We boast an equal claim  
 With him of humble name  
 To be respected :  
 \* \* \* \*

I have already read from *Iolanthe* the sentimental song of Iolanthe to the Chancellor. It seems, perhaps, that in that song sentiment for once has been too much for Gilbert : I know no parallel case, unless it be in *Utopia*. Gilbert's friend, Mr. Walbrook, is of the opinion that the song there (p. 447 in *Utopia*) is serious : the song to the English girl.

A wonderful joy our eyes to bless  
 In her magnificent comeliness  
 Is an English girl of eleven stone two  
 And five feet ten in her dancing shoe ;  
 She follows the hounds and on she pounds,  
 The field tails off and the muffs diminish,  
 Over hedges and brooks she bounds  
 Straight as a crow from "find" to finish.  
 \* \* \* \*

Mr. Walbrook says that this song is serious and not Gilbertian mockery of our national pride and conceit in our young women : not a part of that Gilbertian mockery of our pride and conceit, which we hear in *Pinafore* :

He is an Englishman,  
 For he himself has said it,  
 And it's greatly to his credit  
 That he is an Englishman.  
 For he might have been a Roosian,  
 A French or Turk or Proosian,  
 Or perhaps Italian,  
 But in spite of all temptations  
 To belong to other nations  
 He remains an Englishman. (p. 296.)

Well, I am not quite sure if the song to the English girl be serious, because if Gilbert was in earnest, why in the name of common sense alike and art did he hang this song upon the lips of the company promoter, the most arrant humbug of an opéra of humbugs ?

I suppose the fact is that Gilbert's common sense was so common as to approach horse sense, which is only one degree better than jackass sense. I suppose that so long as he wrote a good popular song, even a song with a rare vein of sentiment beneath it, instead of his more usual vein of ridicule, he was satisfied with it, and had no time for artistic susceptibilities : but to me it appears that there *is* an artistic flaw in that spirited and patriotic song, on that account.

I have even been able, with some forgotten critic's help, to distil a few good lines from *The Mountebanks*, which ought not to be quoted here because Sullivan did not collaborate in this opera : and yet in justice to Gilbert they must be quoted : they are worthy of Thackeray's ballads.

Ophelia was a dainty little maid  
 Who loved a very melancholy Dane,  
 Whose affection of the heart, so it is said,  
 Preceded his affection of the brain.  
 Heir-apparent to the Crown,  
 He thought lightly of her passion,  
 And he wandered up and down  
 In an incoherent fashion.  
 When she found he wouldn't wed her  
 In a river, by a medder  
 Took a header, and a deader  
 Was Ophelia.

From *Princess Ida*—a better opera—come the following lines: the song in honour of university women:

They intend to send a wire  
 To the moon, to the moon,  
 And they'll set the Thames on fire  
 Very soon, very soon.  
 \* \* \* \*

From *The Sorcerer* I have already quoted the best things about the pale young curate. The only other verses worth quoting are the Sticho-Muthia, the dialogue-verse between Lady Sangazure and the plebcian apothecary, Mr. Wells. The lady has taken the love philtre and is in love with the unwilling Mr. Wells. And this is the dialogue in alternate lines, Mr. Wells protesting against her ladyship's love, and her ladyship urging it.

W. Hate me. I drop my "H's," have through life.  
 L. Love me: I'll drop mine too!  
 W. Hate me: I always eat peas with a knife.  
 L. Love me: I'll eat like you.  
 W. Hate me: I spend the day at Rosherville.  
 L. Love me: that joy I'll share.  
 W. Hate me: I often roll down One Tree Hill.  
 L. Love me: I'll join you there.

Then the lady begins in turn and pleads for his love, and Mr. Wells rebuffs her.



- L. Love me : my prejudices I will drop.  
 W. Hate me : that's not enough.  
 L. Love me : I'll come and help you in the shop.  
 W. Hate me : the life is rough.  
 L. Love me : my grammar I will all forswear.  
 W. Hate me : abjure my lot.  
 L. Love me, and I'll stick sunflowers in my hair.  
 W. Hate me : they'll suit you not.

*Utopia*, his last opera practically, has some curiously anticipative satire : it might have been written yesterday ; it is a satire on all the progress and the civilization of Europe : especially on the ironclad steamships, which have made war so terrible that all armaments are soon to be abolished : but also a satire on the other progress of peace, which has made life so sanitary and peaceful that lawyers and even doctors in *Utopia* cannot make a living any more : the prisons have all become model lodging-houses for working men : and the working men are too healthy to need doctors.

The only way to rescue doctors and lawyers—it is suggested—is to introduce the English party-system of government, which will soon destroy all these reforms and bring back law-suits and disease and war again : it is a cheerful programme.

There is not much to quote from *Utopia* : but here is a cynical trifle :

First you're born—and I'll be bound you  
 Find a dozen strangers round you.  
 "Hullo" cries the new-born baby,  
 "Where's my parents? which may they be?"  
 Awkward silence: no reply,  
 Puzzled baby wonders why.  
 Father rises: bows politely,  
 Mother smiles but not too brightly,  
 Doctor mumbles like a dumb thing,  
 Nurse is busy mixing something.  
 Every symptom seems to show  
 You're decidedly *de trop*.

\* \* \* \* \*



You perceive that Gilbert was growing older and his wit more acid. After this opera, which demolishes everything, he practically did not try again. Time had had its little joke with him: the stroke of its thunderbolt had eurdled the milk of his human kindness. His eynicism and satire—unlike Lewis Carroll's fun—were increasing obviously with his age at the expense of his sympathy and good humour: it was time for him to stop, and he stopped like the man of common sense that he was.

It must be obvious after all these quotations that nothing could be more futile or more scholastic and academic than to seek a clue, a principle, for Gilbert's ridicule. To treat him, for example, just as a cynical conservative of the school against whom Plato protested: just as an unbeliever in new and radical and revolutionary doctrines: he does *not* believe, of course (it is true), in such things: he ridicules equality and democracy and even constitutional monarchy in *The Gondoliers*. He ridicules equality and indiscipline and anarchy in *Pinafore* and *The Soreerer*. He ridicules marriage outside one's own class—*mésalliance*—in *The Soreerer*, in *Pinafore*, in *The Pirates*. But he ridicules equally aristocracy and the Peers in *Iolanthe* and in *Patience* and in *The Pirates* and *The Soreerer*. He ridicules educational and academic fads and idealisms in *Patience* and *Princess Ida*. He ridicules high-flown and high-falutin unselfishness, the vaulting ambition of unselfishness which over leaps human nature, in *Patience*, *Ruddigore*, and *The Soreerer* and *The Pirates*.

Only in *The Mikado* and in *The Yeomen* he ridicules nothing in particular and is content with amusing patter set to charming music: but then at the end in *Utopia*, practically his last opera, he ridicules everything and everybody. Everything in modern civilization: the Court, the Army, the Navy, the Law,

Medicine, and the Church : Parliament and the Party System.

The inference is obvious : this is *Punch* : this is good fun : meant for laughter : not serious satire of any sort : not even conservative satire, which is only half-serious, not didactic propaganda of any kind : not the humour of a moralist, but the jests of a comedian.

Gilbert is hardly a humorist : so far as he is, he is one of the cynic humorists who mark the contrast between man's ideals and the facts of life : between man's conscience and the possibilities of the world. He is one of the conservative humorists who mock high-falutin Bolshevism, and revolutionary philosophy. For example, he makes Patience refuse perfection as she knows it in Bunthorne, because love—true love—must be quite unselfish and she would be selfish in accepting him. I have known young women who so refused a happy marriage : they thought they would be too happy. He makes her accept at last Grosvenor, when he has become commonplace, because love for a man so vulgar will not be selfish love, will at least be unselfish love : this is the style of Gilbert's humour : another name for common sense and practical realism. No smaller name will cover it. Moralists and humorists generally go together, but these words or names are too narrow to fit Gilbert well. When the humorist Jane Austen, for example, wrote *Sense and Sensibility* as a study of the contrast between the romantic idealism of an ardent girl, and the facts of life, she was also a moralist and she had a purpose in view : to diminish and discredit sensibility. She was, in fact, only too serious. She subordinated her humour to her serious purpose, to the great detriment of that novel. It falls far below the level of the more humorous novels, of *Mansfield Park*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and *Emma*. But Gilbert never misses success through lack of humour and excess of purpose.

The difficulty with him is of the opposite character : to find a purpose in his verse, to find that element of moralizing and sympathy with human nature which we generally expect from the best humorists.

We don't find much sympathy with human nature in Gilbert : a good deal of these operas consists of ridicule of elderly ladies enamoured of young men : there is Ruth in *The Pirates*, little Buttercup in *Pinafore*, Katinka in *The Mikado*, the Queen in *Iolanthe*, Dame Carruthers in *The Yeomen*, and Lady Jane in *Patience*, the best of the six, as the opera is the best of the six, the best of them all.

I suppose this theme belongs to the rather commonplace vulgarity of Gilbert. We English are a vulgar people in our humour, which matches the American vulgarities about mothers-in-law : and those American vulgarities perhaps derived ultimately from Lewis Carroll and his *Sylvie and Bruno*, that is, from Great Britain.

Some good people have been offended by these scoffs at ageing ladies : it is scarcely worth noting them : Gilbert was nothing if not a commonplace Englishman in mind, with more sympathy for the national and vulgar humour of England, than scrupulous refinement of any kind : necessarily he has the defects of his qualities : this unsavoury subject was Fielding's before Gilbert butted in : it was Juvenal's before Fielding borrowed it from Juvenal, from that ancient Rome which was London in embryo.

And now about all this Gilbertian "patter" : is it poetry ? and what is poetry ?

Mr. Baring has observed that if Gilbert had been a greater poet, a real poet, a Shelley or Shakespeare, or even a Swinburne at his best, or even an Aristophanes at his best, the words of his verses would not have needed their musical setting : nay, one would even have grudged his words to a musician. It is



not necessary to set "Sunset and Evening Star" to music; though it has been set: the music does not improve it: it is rather a gratuitous impertinence. It is not necessary to set Kipling's "Recessional" to music, though it has been set: the music does not improve it: the best poetry does not need music: any more than the best wine needs a bush.

This seems sound criticism, though damaging to Gilbert as a poet. But what is poetry? The absurd writers of *vers libre* maintain that poetry is not mechanism, is not form: does not involve rhyme or rhythm or seansion, but is the spirit and soul of language: anything is poetry which has this spirit and soul: it does not matter about the body of language: *vers libre*, they say, is disembodied poetry. It differs from prose because prose has not the spirit and soul of language: does *not express, as poetry expresses, the highest truths in the shortest and most inspiring words*: "I shall go to him but he will not return to me" is poetry, though the words be without rhyme or rhythm or seansion.

Well, what do you think of it, all of you here? I have certainly chosen, I think, a fair illustration of *vers libre*, an illustration more than fair. If much *vers libre* were on a par with those words of David about the dead child—"I shall go to him but he will not return to me," or "I shall see them in my dreams by the banks of the Ganges: I shall see them by the banks of a darker and a deeper stream" (*Jane Eyre*): or John Locke, "Our ideas are like the children of our youth who die before us: and our minds resemble those tombs to which we are approaching: where though the brass and the marble remains yet the inscriptions are effaced by time and the imagery moulders away," (vol. 1, chap. 10); or, "I never fell in love but once and then it was with a girl who always wore her handkerchief pinned tight around her

neck, with a fair face, gentle eyes, a soft smile, real auburn locks. My passion was not a raging heat, a fever in the veins, but it was like a vision, a distant joy, a heaven, a world that might be. The dream is still left and sometimes comes confusedly over me in solitude and silence and mingles with the softness of the sky and veils my eyes from mortal grossness" (Hazlitt on Malthus, vol. iv of *Collected Works*, p. 103). If *vers libre* were like these passages we should read *vers libre* with more pleasure and profit than we read regular poetry, and not complain, as we do now, that it is printed in plaguey fashion, in short lines and separate lines, instead of being printed in continuous lines and paragraphs like other prose. And, besides that, inasmuch as short lines and separate lines are part of the body, of the form, of poetry, after all, *vers libre* has no right to these devices and ought to be able to stand on its own feet as poetry even though it were printed as prose.

Can it so stand? How much *vers libre* will most of us try to read, if it be printed as honest prose? That will depend entirely on its merits as inspiring language. It will have hard work to pass as poetry, but if it is inspiring language, like the four passages above, it will be read; and we can agree to waive the metaphysical question, whether it is poetry or not. We are not a metaphysical people: and we don't care whether it is poetry or prose, so long as it reads well: but how much of it *does* read well?

But now about the "patter," which is in itself poor poetry generally, as we shall all admit: but is *it* also not poetry of a kind, and how does it pass for poetry?

It passes for poetry, and it *is* poetry, for a very good reason; we are not merely soul and spirit: we have bodies as well: and the bodies have ears: and the ears are susceptible to the body of poetry, to



alliteration's artful aid ; to rhyme and rhythm : our ears are tickled pleasantly with the mechanism of poetry. That is why even philosophy was written in poetry by the early Greek philosophers. It appealed by its metre and scansion to the memory, where prose would have failed to appeal. It had even a sensuous value of a kind : " patter " in the same way fixes itself in the memory, besides tickling the ears. Patter is at least embodied poetry, even though it be poor poetry and second-rate : its body helps to preserve it ; whereas disembodied poetry, that is to say *vers libre*, is as unreal and as unsubstantial as a ghost unless it have the passion and inspiration of a few and rare ghosts. It has not even that sort of glorified body, which the disembodied spirit of man is assumed by the Apostle to receive when he leaves his mortal body.

Patter, therefore, *is* poetry of a kind ; even when it is only of a poor kind : since it has the necessary body and makes the necessary appeal to the ears : the force of the appeal of course depends on the ears which hear it : and no two persons have the same ears for rhyme and rhythm, for metre and scansion. Some persons are only annoyed by rhyme and rhythm, for example, and others are delighted and importunately insist upon them. I have seen a young child, who had ears for rhyme and rhythm, stamp her little feet with rage at the first and rather exasperating line of Wordsworth's " We are Seven." You remember that first lame line—

A simple child  
Who lightly draws its breath  
And feels its life in every limb,  
What should it know of death ?

To her one was obliged perforce to amend that first halting line, and recite it with amendments : if one was mystically inclined, one amended thus :

A simple child, with instincts dim,  
 Who lightly draws its breath  
 And feels its life in every limb,  
 What should it know of death?

If one was prosaic, one was content to recite to her—

A simple child, dear brother Jim,  
 Who lightly draws its breath  
 And feels its life in every limb,  
 What should it know of death?

The simple child in question was content with either amendment, mystical or prosaic, brother Jim or instincts dim, but amendment she was bound to have, or you couldn't recite that stanza to *her* peacefully.

As a final illustration of "patter," I have disinterred a stanza from a very young and unknown poet, Meyerstein. It is about a woman keeping a tavern apparently, and selling pale ale: a man who owes arrears and owns an ass has been killed in a tavern brawl and the ale wife is lighting candles for his wake: and a priest is ready to officiate.

The ass obeyed, and saw the man  
 From whom his bitterness began  
 Calm as a sleeping child.  
 The stubborn chin none could mistake,  
 The eyes that would to pardon wake  
 Were shut, not reconciled.  
 The cloth of gold was torn in parts  
 By greedy toppers' clutch;  
 Of coin, in pockets, through their arts,  
 There was not overmuch.  
*A pale wife, the ale wife,*  
*Was lighting candle wicks;*  
*The priesthood in creased hood*  
 Held up a crucifix.

The ale wife,  
 The pale wife,  
 Was lighting candle wicks;

The priesthood  
In creased hood  
Held up a crucifix.

How does it strike you? I like it for the quaint and unexpected rhymes. I can remember it easily, though it may be very thin poetry: or, I had better say, very pale poetry, as pale as the wife, or—as her ale.

And now to sum up. Canon Ainger is offended with Gilbert's operas, not unnaturally. Canon Ainger is interested in humorists who are moralists, and Gilbert is scarcely ever of this school. A humorist is a moralist also, the Canon thinks, so long as he is trying to teach and guide, as Jane Austen teaches and guides, whether he takes the higher road of tracing the gulf between men's creeds and men's practice, and of painting men's hypocrisies, or whether he takes the lower road of tracing the gulf between men's ideals and this world's possibilities: as Horace or as Jane Austen in *Sense and Sensibility* and Canning in the "Needy Knife Grinder" or Cervantes in *Don Quixote*: in either case he is still a moralist, so long as he is trying to teach and guide. But Gilbert rarely takes the higher road: nor even very seriously the lower. He is rather comedian and *farceur* and mirth-maker, and the Canon is very properly offended. He wants us all to take life more seriously and more sympathetically. But Gilbert is an impenitent follower of the first Greek comedian Epicharmus: *νηφε καὶ μέμνησ' ἀπιστεῖν*—said Epicharmus—Be sober, be vigilant, be unbelieving. Gilbert is unbelieving: he sees chiefly the topsy-turviness of life and its insolubility. He has none of the faith in life and human nature which marks the sympathetic humorist, which marks even the philosopher and the student and the man of science.

*δεῖ πιστεύειν τὸν μαθηγόντα*, said Aristotle: a man

must have faith in life and in human nature and in the laws of outward nature, if he is to be a serious student of any kind, if he is to have any serious purpose. What more can be said about it? The lights are just going out, so to speak, and the curtain is just going down: it seems like breaking flies on a wheel to take comedians like Aristophanes and Gilbert seriously.

Socrates on trial for his life referred to Aristophanes' fooleries about him in court, but he never quoted them, except for a single word, nor took them seriously.

Plato is always quoting Homer: often, but with less approval, Æschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. He takes them all more seriously than he takes the politicians and Pericles (even as Mr. Harold Spender takes George Meredith, Browning and Swinburne more seriously than he takes the great Marquess of Hartington, President Roosevelt and Lord Cromer).

But Plato never quotes Aristophanes. The utmost he will concede to him is to imagine him remaining awake and in serious conversation with Socrates into the grey dawn of morning, long after the rest of the company are peacefully disposed under the table. But he never quotes him. Why should he? Aristophanes is to Plato just one of the unbelieving conservative jesters, who find life insoluble and its creeds unbelievable, but *especially* its reformist and its revolutionary creeds: especially these creeds, because after all no one believes quite in the same sense in the old and the established creeds, but takes them *cum grano salis*, as part of the existing order of things, *faute de mieux*: as occupants in possession and having therefore in their favour nine points of the law. To Plato Aristophanes (or Gilbert) is the jester, who finding all creeds incredible, turns to laughter and to comedy and spends his strength and



wit in mockery of all creeds, but especially of the new creeds, because in them, somehow or other, many people seem to place a new, a real, a fanatic, fantastic, and a most preposterous faith.

Such was Aristophanes to Plato, and Gilbert to Canon Ainger : just comedians and makers of laughter : identical in one point at least with Kipling's Sons of Martha—with the men of action. “To them from birth is belief forbidden—from them till Death is relief afar”—says Kipling, in one of his most powerful and pregnant lines. By birth, by temperament, by their practical turn of mind, by their iron-bound common sense, the Aristophanes' and the Gilberts of this world must make laughter and comedies and farces or make nothing.

They have done their duty, if they make us laugh, if they wile away a weary hour or more (not a bare fifty minutes), if they kill some seventy-five long minutes of tedious time. If only they answer those importunate widows of the world, duty, creeds, religion, conscience, science, scholarship, by dodging their importunate questions and requests, until each widowed lady relaxes into a smile, and forgets her importunities for a moment, in harmless and wholesome laughter, why then they have played their part, they have fulfilled their *métier*, they have done their duty.

And the rest of us have done our duty by them, if we laugh a little : it was all they asked of us : little enough for us to give to them : yet much for us to receive from them “a source of innocent merriment,” “of innocent merriment” in a world so full of cares and insolubilities and importunities.

Try we life long we can never  
 Straighten out life's tangled skein ;  
 Why should we in vain endeavour  
 Guess and guess and guess again.



Life's a pudding full of plums,  
 Care's a canker that benumbs,  
 Wherefore waste our elocution  
 On impossible solution,  
 Life's a pleasant institution,  
 Let us take it as it comes.

\* \* \* \*

Stanzas such as these (*Gondoliers*, p. 322)—and there are many of them in Gilbert—did *not* require Sullivan's music to pass them.

I HAVE undertaken to say or write something about the necessity of religion.

But why, says some one, representing the *Zeitgeist*, choose a subject without actuality : “ *la question de Dieu manque d’actualité* ” some Frenchman has written lately : he means, I presume, that is not opportune to the present hour and the present mood of the world : many young people, i.e., people of the present generation, perhaps most people of the present generation, do not feel that religion is necessary : what is the use then of discussing something that had a meaning for the Victorian age broadly, but has lost its meaning for the twentieth century ?

I see the force of this objection, I think : I see many illustrations indeed of its force.

I asked, for example, a Victorian colleague, a man not very much junior to myself, what *he* assumed to be the basis of a decent self-respecting life, a life which also respected others and sought to be a life of service (one of the catchwords most in vogue at the present time).

“ I think,” he answered, “ that the basis is religion : but you won’t find any discussion of that subject in my writings ” ; the discussion of that subject, I understood him to mean, does not grip the mind of this century ; and cannot find a place in books meant for the reading of the present generation.

I asked a young stockbroker about the same time whether in this age and continent, when to get rich

quick is perhaps the most usual of ambitions and ideals, he would feel tempted to try a coup on the stock market which would land him on "Easy Street" (I am trying to use the language of the moment) and bring him, say, three-quarters of a million of dollars, but would subject him to the charge at the hands of old-fashioned business men and others of sharp practice.

He answered that he would not be tempted by such an opportunity. "That is," I continued, "consciously or unconsciously you are still influenced by religion and a religious education?" "I don't think so," was his reply. "I don't feel conscious of religious scruples: I don't bank on a hereafter, or another world and life: on a Great Assize and a Day of Judgment: but I have young children: I want them to be able to hold up their heads: I have a young wife: I don't want her to hang her head in the presence of decent people: sharp practice does not appeal to me: I want to be one of the decent people myself. I want to do the square and right thing: I don't want 750,000 dollars at that cost: *it isn't done.*"

Coleridge, by the way, said that common sense is intolerable unless it is based on metaphysics, but there spoke the philosopher; the people of this generation, if I understand them, would eschew, forego, renounce even common sense if it is to be burdened with any metaphysics.

I ventured to suggest a second time that he had more religion in his make-up than he was conscious of: he continued to dissent from my interpretation of his scruples: and to stick to his previous explanation. And this explanation interests me personally, as one who am nothing but a Greek scholar, more perhaps than I can hope to make it interest you.

For this explanation, though it is the explanation

current to-day, among thousands of young men and women, for their moral scruples and their exemplary lives, is also the explanation of one at least of the two great Greeks, Aristotle, who for obvious reasons count more with me than almost all other men : all other men, at least, but one : and he wasn't a mere man. At any rate He spoke often as no other man has ever spoken : " Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden . . . take my yoke upon you and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Even Walter Pater never could get over the impression that the Speaker was more than man.

Aristotle, as I understand him, felt very much as my young stockbroker : he fought shy of religion, of the conception of a good God, of an immortal soul, of a conscience hankering after the ideas of a Great Assize and a Heaven and a Purgatory and a Hell. These ideas he felt to be too mystical, too deep buried in subconscious instincts and instinctive aspirations, to be real and practical for *him* : Plato might argue that these ideas are the only logical basis for a self-respecting and decent life : but for himself he did not value the logical bases of a decent and honourable life, half as much as honour and decency in themselves : what *he* felt was the appeal of honour and decency, τὸ καλόν : not their obscure rock-bottom set so far beneath them that he could not plumb those depths nor penetrate those mysteries. He could reach up to τὸ καλόν, honour and decency, in his reflections and ambitions and aspirations : but he could not pretend to peer deeper into that well, at the bottom of which truth probably lay, but a truth beyond the range of *his* vision, as a practical thinker and a naturalist and original researcher, who did not profess to be a mystic and had no mystical imagination.

I am harping on this Aristotelean point of view



because, as I say, I don't think the stockbroker's mind is just a passing phase of twentieth-century caution, or of scientific accuracy, or a passing expression of what is one of the best features of the twentieth-century conscience, its intellectual honesty, its determination not to profess more than it really believes. Long ages of observance of honesty and honour and decency, of observance of *τὸ καλόν*, have so established this creed that actions contrary to it can be put aside with the summary comment, "It isn't done."

When I read other twentieth-century creeds : when I read other people saying that they are only honest because it is the best policy, or yet others saying that with them honour and honesty and decency rest on some reflection that they want to be happy and to secure their own interests, but they doubt if they could be happy or secure themselves, if they neglected the interests of their neighbours, since man is a social animal, I find myself wondering whether this creed of honesty the best policy, or this better creed vaguely called utilitarianism, less vaguely and perhaps more correctly called a high form of hedonism, offers any guarantee to the world of continued honesty, honour and decency.

I feel myself wondering whether it will continue long to bear the strain placed upon it when temptation comes, as it must come, as soon as the influence of a Christian education grows weaker, and as soon as the tempted man and woman realizes more fully that honesty is *not* the best policy always or perhaps often, scientifically speaking, for the individual, only for the race and the nation.

How indeed can anyone weigh carefully the popular American art of advertising and the success of quack advertisers of every school, or how can anyone again study the necessities to which all public men and

all politicians are driven, by the strain of keeping their positions or their parties in power, by the strain of conciliating their supporters, good, bad, and indifferent, of conciliating also their opponents, of being all things to all men, how can anyone study these necessities and yet continue to hope that all the hard-driven officials and advertisers of this age can manage to be all things to all men without more offence to their consciences than St. Paul's conscience suffered? can continue to hope that *they* will succeed in becoming wise as serpents and yet continue to be as harmless as doves? (One of the hard sayings, one of the hardest of the hard sayings, of the Master.)

A certain politician of Italy, by no means the most unscrupulous, though one of the most successful, confessed frankly: "Had I done for myself what I have done for Italy, I should be a scoundrel." Patriotism was his last refuge, you perceive, as Dr. Johnson had the acumen to anticipate for men of his position and his difficulties. This "honesty the best policy" creed and also this utilitarianism or hedonism, I repeat, fill me with apprehension for the coming generations, or would fill me at least, if I did not console myself with the reflection that those who hold this creed are up against Aristotle, a very hard force to be up against: *he* did not express fleeting phases of human nature but a very permanent phase: and he expressed the permanent appeal which honour, honesty, decency, τὸ καλόν, the right and the noble, make to all men, as to my young stockbroker: an appeal which cannot, I think, be watered down or explained away as meaning only "honesty is the best policy" or meaning only a misty utilitarianism or a rather noble form of sentimental hedonism. Aristotle, as I understand him, was not a hedonist by any means: nor even that vague and obscure and difficult word "a utilitarian."

But it does not follow that these metaphysical phrases of his, honour, honesty, decency, τὸ καλόν, the noble and the beautiful, are as effective as religion, or are exactly the same as religion, for hard-driven men and women : these look instead like substitutes for religion, suitable to an intellectual man of science, like Aristotle, happily constituted by nature temperamentally, and happily endowed by luck and accident materially : I mean a man blessed with a competence and great natural gifts and supreme intellect : crowned therefore with friends and comforts : sheltered and cloistered in the academic life of thought and research. Even my young stockbroker, though not so cloistered and sheltered, had never known want, had never known, in an acute form, the temptation to make a fortune by sharp practice : has hardly required as yet that stiff and strenuous Christian education the remnants of which and the fruits of which I suspected to be still stirring within him : though he did not admit it and was no longer conscious of it.

But change the venue, so to speak, of this trial : let the temptations be transferred from a happy man of science like Aristotle or a favoured and prosperous young stockbroker like my friend, to the dim common populations and to the man in the street : what is going to keep *him* straight, unless it be a much more full-bodied and full-blooded religion than this washed-out and watery middle-class academic epicureanism and æstheticism and sentimentalism ? (Epicurus, remember, was not a sybarite but a simple-living and rather high-thinking philosopher.)

How can the great Leviathan, the great vulgar, maintain, against continuous temptations, a high level of honesty on these creeds of "honesty the best policy," or on the better creed of better-paid people, that decency and honesty and honour appeal to their



æsthetic sensibilities? Yes: but what is meant, says some one, by a much more full-bodied and full-blooded religion? do you mean just the renewed preaching of hell-fire sermons, to stem the rising tide of dishonesty? do you mean that in fact the fear of hell-fire is a conscientious fear, only felt by conscientious people? I think it is: but fear of hell is, of course, only the smaller part of a real religion: the larger part is the love of God and goodness and of Christ the Master and Saviour.

These substitutes for Christianity which loom large to-day, "honesty the best policy," "honesty and decency and honour as æsthetic sentiments and appeals to our human self-respect," have nothing of religion in them, for they make nothing of the great force of human nature, love: love of God and goodness and of Christ; they are appeals to the sheltered and the comfortable and the prosperous and the academic: they leave the rest of us cold: they are weak against temptation.

It so happened that a few days after my conversation with my young stockbroker I consulted a friend nearer my own age, one who has seen ten generations of graduates—counting a generation as four years—leave this University since he graduated. "The young fellows of to-day," he answered, "are very well meaning, full of good intentions, even perhaps of good resolutions: but they have not the stamina of forty years ago: they intend to be honest and they want to be: but against a sudden temptation to make a fortune quickly by sharp practice, they have not the resisting force which I think still existed forty years ago, among the Victorians."

They have not the same practical religion, and practising Christianity—I understood him to mean—which the Victorians had. Isn't that largely true? The present generation are very dubious of a second



life, and of the authority of Christ over this life : and they are honest enough to say so : and are all the better for their intellectual and moral honesty, but not all the better for their loss of faith and courage : all the worse, rather : for their anchors begin to slip on a erumbling foundation of quicksands and of the best policy and of utilitarianism and æstheticism : it is quite true, of course, that Christianity cannot be demonstrated, never has been and never will be, since religion is necessarily a venture of faith and courage and not a mathematically demonstrable truth ; but the religious instinct based upon faith and courage has meant a great deal more in the past to the Victorians, than it means to-day to our lackadaisical, Laodicean, and lack-lustre Georgians : and it will have to mean again more to us, before a higher level of common honesty can be regained by the world.

Great masses of the more or less submerged and illiterate population of congested Great Britain, for example, have lost their religious instinct for the time : I happened to read lately Mr. Filson Young's account of the Edith Thompson-Bywater trial (the two persons hanged for the murder of Edith's husband) : the judge—says Mr. Young—talked about the seventh commandment and spoke of adultery : to what purpose ? Why, these people and their set did not know what the seventh commandment was : they were not in theology, so to speak : they hardly knew what was meant by adultery : like the God-forsaken artist Ingram in " Elizabeth's " book, *The Pastor's Wife* ; just an out-of-date Church word for the romance and adventure which gave a spice to their dull lives. Until such people are brought up as Christians again on the Commandments and on the New Testament, says Mr. Young, how *can* any improvement in their modes of living be expected ?

And is not that common sense? a revival of the religious instinct is a *sine qua non* for a revival of a real and true honesty, and a revival of all the other Christian virtues.

I don't want to leave this topic of religion, the best topic in the world, for mere theology: but I think the Anglo-Catholicism which so shocks the Protestants of the House of Commons and makes them revive the old cry of "No Popery" is itself a testimony to the need of religion of which I am speaking. Sir Henry Slessor in that debate was perhaps injudicious: but he had the root of the matter with him, I think, when he said that these Anglo-Catholic "priests" who had captured masses of illiterate and hard-driven people by their devoted lives of service to them, and even by their superstitious rites and ancient rituals, by their quaint drawing, e.g., of crosses in the dust across the church floors with the mediæval prayer of exorcism, "avaunt ye spirits of evil," when he said that these Anglo-Catholic priests with their sacramentarian theories of Holy Communion, established a hold upon the human conscience which no mere negative Protestantism, no theory of a mere memorial service, would ever establish: and he added—and so far as I can judge he was right—that sacramentarian theories of the Eucharist are more and more accepted by the Free Churches, as well as by High Anglicans; that they are necessary in fact to give that supreme service a real meaning and significance: to make of it a rock against poor and illiterate men's and women's sufferings and all their continuous and sordid temptations.

The under-world of Protestantism, said the Bishop of Durham (who is not remarkable for any leaning towards sacerdotalism and superstition and Popery), defeated the Archbishops' bill by shouting "No

Popery ” ; but the under-world of Anglo-Catholicism represents a larger mass of human nature in the raw : how can you expect to revive the religious instinct without an element of mysticism, miracles, myth and mass ? without a service which is something more than a memorial service ?

The sacramentarian theory always *has* been part of Anglican theology, always has been accepted by a portion of the Anglican church, and is more and more a part of every Christian church. To raise the cry of “ Rome ” and “ Popery ” and “ transubstantiation ” avails nothing : transubstantiation is mere metaphysics which not one man in a thousand understands : but if Christianity is to rear its head again as the real bulwark against loose living and crazy dishonest money-making and mad luxury, the three evils of the age and of every age, it has to make something more of Christ’s Last Supper, and those strange words with which He celebrated it, than a bare memorial service ; something more of Baptism too than a formal ceremony with a sentimental value for decent parents ; something more of marriage than a few “ probenaechs,” or a temporary companionship.

I imagine that the churchmen most of us here sympathize with probably, I mean Canon Streeter and the devout modernists, the modernists who have piety and religion as well as rationalism, will not disavow “ sacraments ” and take sides with the under-world of a negative Protestantism : religion is as necessary to most men and women—outside the few elect and academic souls like Aristotle who do not need religion, who need no repentance, as Christ said ironically of the Pharisees—is as necessary as it is also incomprehensible : it is incredible to our agnostic intellect (and the intellect of man, theologians included, has always been agnostic), (it is the

emotions, feelings, aspirations and instincts of man, not his intellect, which make men religious and theological), religion, I repeat, is incredible to our agnostic intellect, but it remains generally necessary to our salvation : *quicumque vult salvus esse*, whoever wishes to remain wholesome in life and feeling, in conduct and heart, it is necessary above all things that he hold some sort of catholic faith : some hold on mysticism and miracle and supernaturalism, without which Christ becomes only a martyr and hero and saint of the past, who misunderstood Himself and His Maker and the nature and meaning and purpose of earthly life, the mere shepherd hero of *The Brook Kerith*.

A recent clever novel is called *Meanwhile* : it discusses what a good man can do "meanwhile" : while Socialism and a better world and a new society are being painfully born ; but why not say "meanwhile" in a larger sense ?

Why not suppose that we are all here to make the best we can make of the present poor world "meanwhile" : while we are waiting, as even the pagans Plato and Socrates imagined themselves to be waiting, for a removal to better conditions, and a second chance elsewhere, in "the house where there are many mansions," as many as all the different kinds of human virtues and human efforts can require for a new start : life is quite unintelligible except as a halfway house to something better, and the precursor of a new start. We have got to believe in that doctrine of the halfway house and in that doctrine of the new start, to make the best of ourselves and of this present life ; and to believe in these things is to have a religion, and the only religion of promise, Christianity.



## I

THIS is the last opportunity I shall find, presumably, for speaking to the graduates of University College as Principal. It should have been as "Master," but the Senate thought that University College was not a school; and they did not like "Warden" because University College is not a gaol (but quite the opposite, in fact); nor did they like "Rector" because it is not an Anglican church (very far from it); nor "Provost" because I am neither a Scotchman nor a magistrate; nor "President" because there is another and a better one: so it had to be "Principal" because that commits me and them to nothing.

Well, I am now *in articulo mortis*, though, like Charles II and also like the Greek language which I profess, I am an unconscionably long time a-dying.

That I am still here to-day, incarnate not carnegified, illustrates the good luck which has followed me through life: or at any rate since I had the good luck, the rare good luck, to strike the shores of Canada and the beautiful gateway of University College fifty years ago. That I heard of the opening here in 1880 was itself a stroke of luck; I heard of it through friends, I mean, rather than through advertisements and through newspapers; and through the chance meeting of friends of mine with Canadians on an ocean steamer and similar accidents, with all of which I need not trouble you,

even if I remembered still, as I do not, the various details.

It is enough to say that even as a very young man I formed the opinion that Canada was a land of opportunity in a sense which could not be used of the even then congested and over-peopled island to which I belong ; as I could readily recognize from having lived a good deal in too characteristically congested and over-peopled cities. Further, I knew from another chance, a Canadian whom I met in my Oxford college, what promise this University offered, what good students and good professors it already contained, and what good candidates were in sight for the vacancy then opening. I struck while the iron was hot, in the heyday of youth and hope, and the stroke was successful. I did not want to tie myself to the fierce competition of an old and congested land : I wanted a land with a small population and endless acres ; I believed even then that the prosperity of Great Britain was due to passing causes, to the industrial revolution which had made Great Britain the world's market for a short period for coal, for the carrying trade, and for the endless manufactures which depended on coal and the carrying trade. I believed even then that the prosperity of the United States and Canada rested on causes much more permanent and stable ; on their small populations—small relative to their virgin acres and their untapped resources—I was depressed (what Englishman is not ?) by the spectacle of East London, of South London, of Liverpool, of Glasgow, of Dundee, of Dublin, Bristol, and Sheffield : some of these towns I only came to see afterwards, but I saw enough already to divine beyond the sight of my eyes. I wanted a land of open spaces, of more freedom, of opportunity for the ordinary man : of more actual and immediate equality for all men of good will : equality as a

fact is admirable, though as a slogan it is rather flatulent. Canada had an unequalled share of equality in 1880. It has still after forty-eight years much more equality for workers than exists elsewhere.

Canada, or this University at least, when I came out, deserved the tribute which Tacitus paid to the then Marseilles, *locus Graeca comitate et provinciali parcimonia mixtus ac bene compositus*; a happy mixture of Greek refinement and native simplicity (plain living and some high thinking).

Therefore I took my luck in my hands and came and it followed me fast and faster: I knew the promise of this college, but I did not know, and no one could have told me, of the amazing strides which this university was to make in the next fifty years: that it was to become the greatest university of Canada and one of the greatest in the English-speaking Empire: not merely in the number of its students, that might have been nothing or a nuisance, but in the quality; I mean:

(a) in their interest in academic work, due to the large admixture of Scotch blood and Scotch intellectual keenness, which temper happily a certain indifference to learning, such as has always marked the practical-minded young Englishmen of the two chief English universities, and has always leavened their university staffs with an undue proportion—undue in proportion to the number of Scotch students—of Scotch and even of Irish teachers.

(b) but far more than that, when I speak of the quality of the students, I did not know then, I could not know, that I should find here students of unsurpassed kindness, good nature, and good humour: always ready to make the best of their teachers and believe the best of them: never influenced seriously, barely influenced at all, by the catchwords which sometimes catch older men and impose upon them:



the catchwords of a narrow nationalism : “ Canada for the Canadians ” and the like. Time and the growth of the university and the increased facility of transit have finally delivered Canada from the two opposite dangers to which universities here were once exposed : to the danger of staffing a university with professors imported wholesale from home, and ignorant of the land to which they are come and the students whom they are going to teach : and to the other danger—the danger of a narrow nationalism—the danger of inbreeding, and of filling the university chairs with men who know only the land which has borne them and the native students from whose ranks they have risen.

To-day we have scores of professors and teachers from universities outside Canada, and scores also of our own Canadians who have added to their course here the more specialized courses belonging naturally to the universities of older lands and more specialized studies, universities drawing their pupils from much older and more richly endowed and more specialized schools : schools in which a boy begins his university subjects at a much earlier age and follows them much more consecutively and continuously, even before he enters his university, and necessarily receives a much more intensive training in them than a new land can offer ; the English boy is a product, when he has brains and industry, like an English field, of intensive cultivation.

I have said nothing in all this of the other advantage which this university has offered in the last fifty years. What other university can offer a professor the moving spectacle of students of his own leaving him and the university to fill the highest posts which a great and growing country has to give, to become its premiers and political leaders and its judges : its leading lawyers and doctors and engineers and teachers and clerics



and journalists ? If I have not reaped the full satisfaction of this opportunity it was merely that I preferred, when the time came to choose, not casually and accidentally but deliberately and for good reason, the comparatively neglected field of Greek, instead of Latin : I was a book-worm living in and for books : I was called " a walking dictionary " when I was twelve years old ; I turned necessarily to the literary nation, not to the practical. I should have been false to my " genius " (I am using the word in its Latin not its English sense) had I not done so. The choice was deliberate and I have not regretted the necessity of ploughing a lonely furrow.

I know, as you know, gentlemen, that he is not a wise man in general who sets himself against the age and against the *Zeit Geist*, who makes no compromise with the age, who neither understands it nor wants to understand it : who prefers to row steadily against the stream with laborious oars and aching muscles, making no perceptible progress upstream : expending his energy in keeping his little craft almost stationary, content if it be not carried rapidly backwards, over the Niagara of the *Zeit Geist*, and plunged finally into the whirlpool rapids below the cataract.

But these general reflections about the *Zeit Geist* are not as cogent in all cases, as they seem at first sight in their broader aspect. I conceived when I made that choice of Greek over Latin, and I conceive still to-day, that the writings of the Greek philosophers, historians and dramatists have a meaning and a value which is literally eternal and unique, as long at least as the sun and moon endure ; I conceive that in the intellectual world, there is nothing left remarkable beneath the visiting moon compared with the literature of Greece : that there is not a modern problem in history, philosophy and science which was not started by Greeks and does not still owe life and light to

them : that every ethial and economical problem with which the world wrestles painfully in this age of chaos, has been illuminated by them : that free thought is the gift of Greece to the world, as law was the gift of Rome : that nothing supreme except the Christian religion—I see the magnitude, believe me, of that execption—was added to life after and later than the genius of Greece ; and even that religion, as you know, was developed by apostles and thinkers trained in Greek cities and Greek learning, and writing in the later Greek language, and owed its articulated dogmas and doctrines to Fathers of the Church and philosophers brought up on Plato.

I conceived that it was worth while so to interpret Plato and Aristotle and Thucydides and Herodotus and Sophocles, to mention only half of the great Greek decemvirate, as to show to Canadian students that these books are no back numbers out of date but crammed full of treasures new and old : *φωνᾶντα συνετοῖσιν* : significant to all intelligent men of every age and race : the five who not only ushered in a renaissanc of learning in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but are for ever re-creating learning and intelligenec.

“ There is no old age in Greece,” said an old Egyptian, wondering at the buoyancy and zest and vitality of Greeks : he might have said as well or better, there is no old age for Greek literature : young men, mere boys, have been turned to the study of Greek by reading Rollin’s *Ancient History* : chiefly, I presume, because Rollin is so full of Herodotus.

And therefore I have spent my elostered life—as a witty Greek said to Soerates—talking in a forgotten corner of this great city preoccupied with other cares (*hic aliud agens populus*) to a handful of boys (and girls now ; but Soerates had no such luek as mine, but was confined to boys : confined to helping boys

in their confinement : to acting as accoucheur to the masculine travail of the boyish mind, and as midwife to deliver boys of their unconseious deep-buried progeny of thoughts : and for that reason naturally prepossessed by the charm and beauty of the young intellect of the boy), talking to a handful of boys and “neglecting,” as the same witty eritie continued in the same reproachful strain, “neglecting the banks and market places, the city and stores and offices of men, where men acquire knowledge of life, and of business, and balance of mind—and a balancee also at their bankers.”

But under the circumstances, thanks to my lucky star, I am as impenitent as Socrates himself. If there be anything else I have tried to do besides interpret the great Greeks, it is only a part of the same Greek source and fountain : Plato and Aristotle and the other three not only wrote philosophy, they also, being interested in everything, wrote literature : whenever therefore I open my mouth—even if sometimes I put my foot in it—it is more often to bring out fragments and adaptations of Greek literature : though my hearers do not know it, and I am not fool enough to frighten them by saying so, I am only serving them—as the Greek writers themselves said of Homer and of their debt to him—I am only serving them *hors d'œuvre* or entrées or joints from the menu of Greek literature ; I say nothing out of myself : I can find nothing worth saying : I am only quoting *them* : but so long as I don't say so aloud, so long as I don't repel my simple audience by saying so aloud, I sometimes find they are not altogether uninterested, in spite of my being only a professor of Greek : if they *are* interested it is of course in reality for the exactly opposite reason, it is because I am a professor of Greek, and don't need to roam and wander far afield for a subject to talk about : the illimitable



ocean of Greek literature with all its wit and wisdom and knowledge of life and man lies before me : it is only for me to pick and choose at leisure from what part or what port of that ocean I shall launch my little borrowed craft of speech ; and if I ever add anything, any foreign element, to my Greek borrowings it is only taken, as I hinted before, from the other book of literature, the only literature which rivals and surpasses the Greek, the book of the Jews and the Christians.

“ They didn’t know everything down in Judee,” but they knew down in Judea the only things which the Greeks did not know, and for the lack of which the Greeks ended up naturally—most of them at least—for all their youthful gaiety and verve, in melancholy and pessimism : melancholy and pessimism almost equalling the writings of the other nation of philosophers, theologians and theosophists, the Hindoos of India. But these others, these non-Greeks, drank so deeply of the simpler and more childish and therefore deeper springs of faith, hope and charity, that they came to be optimistic about life : to believe in its provisional nature : to accept it in faith as a half-way house and jumping-off place for a longer and more promising pilgrimage after this life ; they were optimists, because those non-Greek and humbler and less artificial yet deeper and more natural springs inspire more poetry and visions more beatific even than the Pierian springs of Greece, whereunto resort only the wise and prudent.

The simpler springs have inspired even grammarians—like the grammarian of Browning’s poem—they can inspire the hardest and the dullest researches and researchers, provided that the searchers do *not* think that death is the end. The want of such springs is perhaps hardly felt in the heyday of youth : at any rate by the readers of Plato and Thucydides and Hero-



dotus and Sophocles : and Aristotle himself, as a student of Nature, never seems to have felt the want of them appreciably : but they justify themselves, these non-Greek springs of consolation, when the sun is sinking from the hills of Attica and the hemlock potion is preparing : if I talk about them ever and when I talk, it is because truth is better even than Plato and because I conceive no truth is so true and so essential to every man and woman for his common life and difficulties and temptations, as this one corner of truth which was not within the range of the sophisticated Greek intellect, which they overlooked as foolishness, and yet continues to be, as Socrates himself surmised, the only raft on which a man after this life's shipwreck reaches shore honestly and honourably, without illicit life-lines, without mean concessions to life, and without loss of self-respect or loss of hope.

## II

An occasion like this, when so much kindness and consideration is being lavished on one, makes a man, any man of sense, very humble, very unusually humble, it may be.

It is one of life's little ironies, inverted ironies perhaps, that the rarest and latest and most Christian of virtues, humility, is best stirred into activity—at any rate with sensible men who know themselves, and who should better know himself than one who has spent a lifetime at the feet of Socrates ?—is best stirred into activity by the occasions when he is receiving public recognition and kind words beyond his deserving, and in spite of all “ his faults of lenience and omission.” I have not altogether even yet forgotten the humility and qualms and scruples which I felt when Worcester College, Oxford—may her name be blest—elected me a Scholar, and sent me to the devout old Provost, who

received me in the humaner spirit of that happier age, kneeling and in prayer. I have not entirely forgotten even yet the qualms, scruples and humility with which I learned that my other college, Merton, had given me its Fellowship. Nor have I forgotten, last but not least, "the scruples and humility" conveyed to me by the Principalship of University College.

These meeting-points, these junctions, so to speak, of the divergent high-roads of Religion and Intelligence, of Christianity and Literature, spirits never identical and not always coincident, sometimes, and indeed often, vehemently, violently and most perversely opposed to each other—these junctions have always appealed to me, and I have welcomed gratefully these unions on occasions like the present, when I am conscious of receiving a welcome beyond the deserts of a commonplace character and mediocre intelligence.

Because, gentlemen, it is not religion alone or Christianity alone which on such an occasion breeds humility in a man, even though he has enjoyed the best of all starts in life—a start no longer in this distracted age generally available: birth, training and education in an old-fashioned Victorian and God-fearing home. No, it is intelligence just as much. If he has any intelligence at all, he knows what the Poet-Laureate of England (the real Laureate, not the titular Laureate and Professor of Poetry) means when he says:

If you can face both triumph and disaster  
And treat those two impostors just the same.

He knows, every man of common sense knows, that they are both impostors: that the man with popular gifts skims the cream off a popular age, an age of democracy; while the other men who are without popular gifts, the unadorned, who are handicapped by

physical blemishes, by imperfect vocal chords, by trivial but disfiguring mannerisms of any sort, are stranded by the harsh winds of their ill-luck on the lee shore of oblivion, because they cannot blow their own trumpets, and send up their rockets, and their S O S. And there they are left high and dry, "all silent," as the poet has it, "and all damned," so far as the applause of popular audiences is concerned.

So then, gentlemen, the two forces that have fashioned me between them, Victorianism and Democracy, have conspired with common sense to attune me to a becoming modesty this evening, and to the essential grace of humility.

I hope it is not altogether inconsistent with modesty or with humility if I, a mid-Victorian, now proceed to flout for a few minutes the shibboleths of this Georgian age. I submit to you that we are suffering to-day not only from a yellow press—that merely is the echo of the spirit of the age—but from a yellow literature : a very sensational literature. Sensational, perhaps most sensational even, when it is more or less scientific, for even science is deserting continually to the sensationalists, as that little series called "To-day and To-morrow" abundantly illustrates.

There is nothing very surprising in yellow literature, no doubt—nothing at all new—the obvious and very ancient trouble about literature is insincerity, and the obvious and very ancient source of insincerity in literature, as in life, is the natural passion for novelty, the inevitable ambition to write or say something new : "to hear or tell some new thing."

But something new in a fairly old world and in an intellectual age well acquainted with the past is not likely to be also something true ; except indeed in the sphere of those scientific inventions which smooth the upper surfaces of life and increase its material conveniences : telephones and wireless and phonographs



and radio and aeroplanes ; *κρήναι καὶ λήροι*, fountains and fooleries, as Demosthenes said : or, what is better, modern surgery improved by means of radium and X-rays and ultra-violet rays and a longer life for man by means of all these things ; or—what is better than them all—the conquest of Arctic and Antarctic wastes and the climbing of Everest's peaks by means of all these inventions.

But in matters more intimate, and of deeper moment, the character, conduct and unspoken creeds of men and women and children, the new which is bent on being new is not likely to be either sincere or true : the literature of a literary and intellectual age is bound to succumb continually to this obsession for novelty and to the attendant spirit of insincerity.

A "Victorian" child, unless my memory grossly deceives me, was sworn to temperance, soberness and chastity. An earlier and mediæval child—unless "this history" also "is all bunk"—was even sometimes sworn by St. Francis to poverty, chastity and obedience.

Well, that mediæval vow of poverty would be a priceless counterpoise to-day to the Georgian craze for money, which inspires so many gunmen and thugs on this continent, and not gunmen and thugs only, but all the tribes of gamblers, male and female, each after his or her own kind.

And, apart from thugs, gunmen and gamblers, what chance of peopling the waste spaces of Canada to advantage, when the first demand of almost all men to-day is for "standards of living" much higher than that hard life of poverty which was bravely faced by the pioneers who established Ontario ? Where are such pioneers to-day ?

I turn to the next vow. The mediæval or Victorian vow of chastity would be a priceless talisman to an age in which the itch to say something new inspires



literature to flout the old standards of chastity set by age-old convention alike and by nature and biology, for the chaster sex first, and then set by life's experience also, if in a less degree, for the stronger, which is also the weaker sex, the stronger-weaker sex, as a Greek would say, the sex which is sometimes pleased again to-day to call itself "polygamous," and thereby to fall behind even the sexual standards of its vaunted monkey-ancestors. There is nothing new or true for men at any rate, in the levity and licence of Georgian literature in this matter of chastity.

As the missionary from India reminded us the other day, the gate has always been strait and the way has always been narrow for the man who wanted to find a useful life, instead of an earlier and cheaper death; he found it and can find it still in the chastity which, being sublimated and transfigured, and transfused with mental and emotional energy, enables those who have given their strength to thought, to art, to science, to the pursuit of any truth and any unselfish end, who have given their strength to any of these things, only not to women, to achieve that control of themselves which passes later into the control of Nature, or of poetry, or of knowledge and science, or of any other high achievement, and, best of all, of religion.

Though I have said nothing, you perceive, of the smaller gifts of chastity, of the happy faces and the tranquil eyes of the inmates of nunneries and monasteries; but I have marked these signs and omens enviously, how even in their youth these devoted and devout spirits have escaped that brutal and raving master who rode roughshod over the earlier and poorer Pagan world.

The Pragmatist test of truth—the test by values and results—will make short work of a cheap era of literature and liberty—liberty to go anywhere, which means to end nowhere—they that are too weak to

carry a cross will carry nothing ; they that are filthy will be filthy still, till they reach premature extinction amid wormy circumstance.

And then comes the vow of obedience, which insincere or infidel literature—and infidel in Latin only means faithless to oneself—is to-day scouting scornfully ; obedience only means, I shall interpret, that quiet, good-natured, amiable and patient performance of common duties in obedience to authority which enables even this mad world somehow still to go, which prevents a society from being blown up sky-high and hell-deep by the passions of jealousy, selfishness and dishonesty, which have convulsed previous civilizations and have carried out their corpses to the potter's field, and stand waiting at the door to carry out the corpse of the twentieth century also if it can remember nothing of the mediæval vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, and if it wholly abjures them ; obedience, I presume, in short, is the angelic name, the heavenly name for these useful and essential servants of mankind who in the characteristic misnomer of this intellectual age have been dubbed “ cheerful idiots.”

*κικλήσκουσιν ἀβέλτεριαν θνητοί γε, θεοὶ δέ  
πείθω κικλήσκουσιν*

or, in iambs,

*ἀβέλτερον θνητοὶ καλοῦσι, θεοὶ πεθαρχικόν·*

I need not quote divines or Christians to establish this. I will be content with a philosopher and utilitarian ; it is about seventy-five years since John Stuart Mill, who did not live to see any of the modern triumphs of science, nor the perfection of its engines for destruction, submarines and gas bombs and poison bombs, and long-range guns, nevertheless prophesied in the mere innocence of far-seeing thought and brooding philosophy that if men did not learn to be ascetics with their brains not less than with their bodies, to

control their ideals and their intellects not less than their lusts and their appetites, they might end in so conquering Nature and her forces as to destroy themselves wholesale with their neighbours and their so-called enemies in one final and fatal triumph of life-destroying inventions and ingenuities.

It is chiefly the British Empire and the Young League of Nations to-day—the League of Nations which is by interpretation applied Christianity (not “applied science”) which prevents the debacle of twentieth-century civilization in a second “Great War.”

Some one demurs to all this as pessimism ; no, it is nearer optimism ; it is inspired by hope. I recognize, most of you recognize, that there is another better side to all this, to this apparent craze to get rich quick, to this thirst for money, pleasure and a good time (whether among thugs and gunmen and gamblers, or among upper-class young women). “Go-getter” is the slang of the moment. It is only a human nickname ; a worldly euphemism for what the angels call, I imagine, in their deeper insight and more spiritual language, “desperation and despair and defeat.” Does anyone doubt that the revival of a real belief in life, a belief that it has a sufficient purpose and a worthwhile goal—better goal than this earth furnishes—would at once and by a single stroke, change, lift and convert hundreds—even thousands—of those money-crazed desperadoes and those desperate good-timers, into sober seekers after honest self-control ? Even into faithful pilgrims journeying prayerfully toward a more abiding and a more continuing city ? Out of this chaos and this Babel of a world, wherein we squander our intellects on things that perish, and fritter away our instincts and conscience and the “still small voice” which we can yet hear (above the sirens and the megaphones and the radio of a mechanical age), on vanity of vanities.



But science, which is our *Zeitgeist*, has not yet succeeded in reconciling herself to religion, in fusing herself into religion, and the time of refreshment is not yet come : the long-looked-for, perhaps yet distant, day for our deliverance from our present intellectual impasse and our spiritual penumbra : when the light that is in us is darkness, how great is that darkness !

Enough of preaching and prosing ; it is time, and more than time, as this dinner is a sort of friendship's offering to myself, to pass to lighter and sligher and more personal themes.

When a man has spent fifty years more or less in a cloistered and academic life, a cushioned and sheltered life, a life hidden with Plato and Aristotle and the other half-dozen great Greeks, in a forgotten corner of this great and preoccupied city—as Callicles said of Socrates—talking with a handful of youngsters in an upper chamber and missing the scenes where other men spend their lives, in the market-place, at the bankers' wickets, at the receipt of custom, in the theatre or the law-court and Parliament, what can be said of him worth practical men's attention, what can be said by him for himself ?

This, perhaps, that happy still is the man whose annals are dull ; dull mine have been in a sense, but even more certainly happy, beyond the ordinary human measure happy.

Happiness is obviously subjective : it is to find the only career, though it be only in a corner, which has ever appealed to you ; to find it and to stick to it like grim death.

I never remember a time when I should not have been glad and proud and ambitious to teach Greek in a university, and I even begin to imagine now, superstitiously, that I had a fancy for Toronto, when I first heard its name, viz. in one of those geography



lessons which used to be taught to English children in a dame's school.

Superstition perhaps ; imagination plays strange tricks with memory. But, anyhow, how few people actually find the precise hole into which they conceive they can fit ; how happy those few : how superlatively happy !

Rationalists will tell you that if a man has a definite ambition, especially, they sometimes add, a narrow and silly ambition, he will probably attain it, if only because its narrowness and silliness smooth away the obstacles which usually beset ambition ; there are so few rivals.

And further, gentlemen, if a man has the sponge-like elastic nature of a student, the nature which absorbs readily and spontaneously what he reads and hears, and is not congenitally deaf, as other men are, to the majority of the things they hear and read, because these things have no message to their ears, and are tedious and unmeaning to them : I repeat, if a man is elastic, susceptible, impressionable, he is well fitted to shine in those curious competitive examinations for scholarships, fellowships and academic prizes which used to mark the universities of Oxford and Cambridge.

They do not mark those universities so much to-day, because it has dawned upon the colleges that something more is needed for the administration of a college than literary susceptibility, and because some of the dignitaries once so chosen fifty years ago turned out afterward to be quite incapable of interesting, still more of controlling, ordinary students : incapable even of lecturing at all.

For even lecturing itself, gentlemen, has some affinities with politics : for which, said a great and successful man of the Victorian age, a man at once statesman and man of letters, the first three requisites

are a fine voice, a commanding presence, and no convictions.

Some of these literary scholars, as I remember them, had none of these desirable qualities: no voice, no self-possession, no nerve, still less insolence. But even insolence, provided it be "genial insolence," goes a long way toward popular lecturing.

Mr. Cecil Rhodes noted these deficiencies and when he founded his scholarships arranged for the selection of scholars who should have other qualities besides the absorbent and elastic; he noted that the scholars of Oriel, like the wines of Oriel, lacked "body"; he arranged in his will for supplying "body" to the scholars' table and to the college cellar.

But to return to myself, if a man realize his academic ambition for the University of Toronto, by some lucky chance, by some casual meeting with colonial ministers and functionaries, by one of those coincidences which make up life ("Man is a chapter of accidents," said Herodotus), he is well on the road to happiness at once, but much further on the road when his good luck throws him into the society of congenial colleagues, and of a merciful and just President, and of students who have always been conspicuously generous, good-tempered, appreciative, always indulgent to professors and ready to make the best of them. Yes, and who also, being largely Scotch in origin, have been delivered from that instinctive distrust of scholars and intellectuals, which makes a lecturer's career less easy in the English universities, and among those English undergraduates who share the English doubt about thought and education, and the English instinct for character, conduct and action, even though the action be merely athletic prowess.

It seems to me that the Englishman, Mr. C. E. Montague, in that powerful novel called *Rough Justice*, has somewhat exaggerated that side of Oxford; I

think it was less indifferent to thought and reading in the "schools," as I remember it, than as he depicts it ; but no one will deny the broad proposition that the *mauvaise honte* of both don and student in Oxford, their horror of gush and enthusiasm, often seals lips which would have added more interest to life if their owners had been more expansive and more fluent and less reserved and reticent.

Why, there was an undergraduate at Merton, I have been told, who some years ago was shocked when his lecturer, lecturing on Aristotle's poetry, quoted Bernard Shaw. "I call it playing it low down," he said, "bowling a sneak almost, to quote Bernard Shaw in a lecture on the great thinker of ancient Greece." This young gentleman had not much use for Bernard Shaw.

The second stroke of luck for me, then, was to find myself here among students, not only always generous and merciful, but endowed with the Scotch taste for philosophy and argument, and with the Scotch lenience and indulgence toward that lecture system which often presented itself to the English undergraduate as just so much "futile piffle."

A third stroke of luck, to be in the growing university of a growing Dominion ; to see passing out year by year from my college, and even sometimes from my classes, the coming judges, clergy and administrators, doctors, statesmen and journalists ; the men of light and leading of a nation wider flung, even, than the United States in its extent of territory, in its potential development, in its capacity to make good and to make careers. What university in the whole world has offered as much encouragement to a professor or student as this University of Toronto and this college of the university ? I need not particularize on this subject to-night before this audience, which includes so many dignitaries of whom I have been speaking,



and which would have included but for his age the Chancellor, Sir William Mulock, who is in our thoughts to-night on his eighty-fifth birthday : of whom what can one better say than this, that if only half of the men and women who attain to his age could retain only half of his energy, mental and physical, the world would become a better place for the old than it has been hitherto ?

So then every stroke of luck has fallen to my lot ; the happiest of all professions (the only happy profession to persons of a certain temperament), and the happiest of all professions in the happiest *milieu* for it, and at the happiest time of that *milieu*, when we can look back at last in peace and pride to the Great War and the great days of the university and colleges, when, as the President told the American undergraduates, these halls and these colleges were “ proud and empty.” Was there ever a happier and better claim made for Canada, and for Canadians, by any man, President or professor or politician ?

And yet I am talking all this time almost only of the University of Toronto, not of Canada, but I have also had the luck of seeing Canada grow into a nation *pari passu* as I grew to maturity. I have had the luck to witness the initiation of the greatest, and it may well turn out the most beneficent, political experiment ever made, even on this continent of political experiments, the spreading out, I mean, not here only, but through the world, of half a dozen allied and kindred nations and dependencies, into self-governing and proud and autonomous Dominions, and yet remaining united in generous and loyal recognition of the Mother Country and of the past—and rejection of the past, gentlemen, is never generous or faithful, however it be masterful and manly—remaining united with that Mother Country which once exercised all final authority over her daughters. Henceforth for mother



state and daughter states to understand each other and be forbearing to each other need not be more difficult in politics than it is already in each private house. The private difficulties between mothers and daughters, so obvious and numerous in this age, may be a good training and mutual discipline for the larger and yet easier and simpler difficulties, it may be, which belong to political motherhood and daughter-ship. In this wise experiment of the British League of Nations lies the promise and augury of peace for the whole world : even more fruitful and promising in a sense than the League of Nations itself, in so far as it is an easier and more obvious experiment and excites less misgiving among pessimists and doubters and cynics.

Is anyone here a pessimist and doubter and cynic about our League of British Nations ? Perhaps hardly anyone ; nor will there be many in my time, nor in the time of most of you ; even to the youngest of you and the most exposed to the changes and chances of political conditions, I will only say beware ever and always of that dangerous and repellent maxim : “ Take short views in politics.” No, gentlemen, take long views if you wish to do the best, and you do wish, for Canada, for the Motherland, yes, and for the United States, too, and, most of all, even for the whole world. Take long views, the longest you can take, and at all times and at all costs be loyal to the past and remember the rock whence you were hewn. If the time should ever come when the distances which separate the component parts of our world-wide Empire render the part in one corner indifferent to the interests of a part in another corner, render Canada, for example, unwilling to spend money, and it may even be lives, to help Australia or New Zealand, or render Australia or New Zealand or South Africa unwilling to help Canada, then indeed the testing time, the acid test of our great and beneficent venture of faith, hope and charity

will be at hand. "Penny wise and pound foolish," will be the policy of isolation, separation and disruption. Canada, at least, has not been penny wise or pound foolish in the past. She was quick and prompt to help the Mother Country in South Africa and after that in the great and greater war. With her attainment of nationhood and autonomy, some Canadians in the future, it is just conceivable, may incline to that policy of isolation from the world which is now making a last and desperate struggle for its life, with the people who naturally and necessarily influence Canada daily, her neighbours and cousins to the south. Some Canadians in the distant future, it is just conceivable, may lean away for a moment in a difficult hour from the British League of Nations and from the League of Nations, to the shelter of the Monroe Doctrine, but it does not seem a likely policy; rather it seems even mad and suicidal in this age, when the world every day becomes more and more one world. But it is a cloud of a kind, no doubt, though no bigger to-day than a man's hand, which hangs over the horizon of this great country, and some day, if your heirs are not generous and loyal to the past, as well as wise and far-seeing, may obscure the Canadian sky and wreck Canada's manifest destiny.

To a man of long views it is obviously better for us to spend money and lives in order to remain part of an Empire almost strong enough in herself to guarantee world peace, and certainly strong enough to guarantee it if Canada but follow her natural rôle of mediating between the Empire and the States, of keeping them in close touch and virtual alliance each with each. That is her mission to-day, and may it continue to be her mission always. Democratic governments are, of course, subject to moments of passion and panic, wherein men of short views may conceivably have an innings and a chance of wrecking the best experiment

in politics and peace-making which the world has ever seen. It is for you, and for the heirs whom you will influence, to make the policy of "short views" as impossible in the future as it is impossible to-day.

You are helping at this moment to relieve the horrors of life for the miners of Wales. If there be the same sympathy and help waiting in Canada for Australia or New Zealand or South Africa in their days of trial, the stability of our Empire, and therewith of world peace, is assured.

But to return, by way of closing, to my own happy lot. A man, of course, may not lawfully build his theory of life and the universe upon his own little life and his own fortunate surroundings. I cannot see life as a whole, as I have already protested, perhaps at undue length, through glasses as rosy as those that are turned toward my own experiences in Canada. But God forbid that any Victorian pessimism such as I share to-day with other Victorians, such pessimism as I have been labouring to set forth, should be personal; far from it. It is wholly impersonal and merely abstract.

My first President, Sir Daniel Wilson, used to say that he had had a singularly happy life, blessed in his profession; blessed in his wife, blessed in his children; blessed in his students. I can repeat it all, and add: "the half has not yet been told you, the half has not been told."

And now I feel like saying, to parody with genial insolence the best literature I have met or you have met, "I have fought the academic fight, I have kept the academic faith, faith in university education, and especially in the classics, tempered only by the English prejudice that character and conduct and creed are three-fourths of life, and learning and intellect only a bare fourth part—henceforth there is laid up for me"—ah, but how am I to parody now? A short and fading

memory, such as my profession allows, a few feet on a wall, in a picture which will in a few years be unrecognizable to the majority of students, even as my father-in-law's and Sir Daniel's pictures over there are already unrecognizable to hundreds of students and graduates : the goal of threescore years and ten is reached and passed : the candle to-night gutters and sputters and splutters in the socket.

It is only by one of those characteristic strokes of luck which have been so showered on me that I sometimes am tempted to think with the philosophers of Hindustan and with the Roman Church that my English mother or my Irish grandfather must have "laid up merit" for me—it is only by such a stroke of rare luck that I am here to-night at all. I ought to have been Carnegieified while yet incarnate, long months ago ; but last year, you remember, I mean, of course, 1927, happened to be the centenary of this university, and the President and Governors mercifully bethought them that there would be senior men and whiteheads coming back, and wistfully asking for some one of the old guard, some survivor of the old College Council, which administered the college and the university in their days of happiness, in their brief four years of ignorance and bliss ; and with Professor Ramsay Wright away in Oxford and Professor van der Smissen, our dear and now departed colleague, heavy with years, and Professor Baker belonging to the Carnegieified and no longer to the university or college, I was the only specimen left of the prehistoric and antediluvian age, "the last of that bright band."

Alas for love, if life were all,  
And naught beyond, Oh Earth !

Therefore, I was allowed this respite and reprieve by the kindness and goodwill of some of you gentlemen and of many others, both men and women also,



scattered over Canada and over this continent and some even in distant Europe, whose names and faces I am holding in my grateful heart to-night : both men and women, both the living and the dead, who, being absent, yet speak to me with you to-night in the same accents of kindness and affection as when I was a young man and green and fresh to life and to Canada.

[The words that follow are a combination and expansion of an address to the Canadian Club of Montreal, and of an after-dinner speech before the Literary and Scientific Society of University College.]

THIS is the age of polar expeditions ; but polar expeditions are an allegory ; that is their chief interest ; they figure the life of the student. In my own case, for five-and-twenty long years, or more, I have been seeking the pole of truth ; and ever as I think to approach it, I find the solid ice becoming thin beneath me, and the stretch of dark and open water widening before me ; and certainty and solidity give place to doubt, and reflux tides, and fitful drifting to this side and to that. There is one particular pole of truth which I cannot reach for all my twenty-five years' search ; and as I am tired of open water and open questions, I propose to relinquish the search here and now, and give any explorer here the advantage of my experience and my knowledge of the routes, in case by their aid he can reach the goal which I renounce.

The problem is this—here in the University of Toronto are so many Canadian undergraduates. Before I became familiar with them, I lived in the company of as many Oxford undergraduates ; now which are the more mature ? This is the problem which has exercised my best wit, till I have dropped the question in despair, and leave it for you to settle.

(1) The Oxford undergraduates call themselves “men” *par excellence*; our undergraduates continually speak of themselves as “the boys.” Perhaps that should decide the question in favour of Oxford; but perhaps it should count the other way. We must look for further evidence.

(2) There is much greater liberty at Oxford on the part of the individual as against his fellows; less interference with the individual from the strong hands of corporations, whether these be class-organizations or Greek Letter societies; the freshman in Oxford is more independent of his seniors; the senior is more independent of the freshman; the freshman has no need to apprehend violence there; the senior has no need to apprehend the necessity for exercising violence. There is more individualism in Oxford; more independence of judgment; less collectivism. So far, Oxford is the home of liberty for both freshman and senior.

(3) But in some other respects there is greater liberty on the part of undergraduates here; that is, greater liberty if not towards each other, yet towards the authorities. At Oxford one must keep term; one must stay in Oxford till one is dismissed; and come up as soon as, but not before, one is summoned; and be indoors by midnight; and sleep in Oxford every night. At Toronto one comes when one likes; and if the authorities fondly seek to live up to the term, as stated in the calendar, by continuing to lecture after the students are tired of listening, and by refusing railway-certificates before the calendar date for their issue, well, then the students “call the lectures off,” that is, I think, the phrase; and some of them, I am told—I almost despair of reaching the lower depths of that well in which the truth about these things lies buried—some of them, I am told, constitute themselves, positively for this occasion only, professors and

registrars of brand-new business colleges, and in that capacity issue railway-certificates to each other ; in other cases probably the President of the Freshman Year enacts with the railway magnates the part of the acting-President of the University, and acts the part of course with much more spirit and success, and receives from them on his behalf the coveted certificates. In fact, about Christmas, when I and my staff are struggling to live up to our calendar, while those to whom we stand *loco parentis* are returning to their homes before the time, I am continually reminded of a song popular in Ontario, which runs, I think, something like this : "Nobody works in our house but Father."

(4) The difficulty of controlling the freshman, on this side of the ocean, at which I have already hinted, is a standing difficulty (I mean to the other students) in all universities of this continent. In Oxford the freshman can be severely left alone ; not called upon ; and he is abashed and miserable at once. Here much more drastic and positive means are required to keep him in his place. Why ? My friend Dr. Parkin thinks it is because the civilization of this continent began in rebellion, and, therefore, each youngster feels afresh—according to the biological law that we all repeat on a small scale in our individual development the history and evolution of our race—that he must prove himself worthy of his great-grandfathers, and rebel in turn against *his* immediate elders ; that is, against the Second Year.

It is an ingenious theory, but if it be the true explanation for this country, wherein United Empire Loyalists are seen and sometimes heard, it shows how much these same United Empire Loyalists have still to do ; and how deep and dark the Americanization of our universities has grown to be.

(5) The college yells of our students illustrate this



same Americanization of the student-body, and also, perhaps, a certain lack of humour (but that is another story). They illustrate, also, the unique conservatism of students; a conservatism deeper perhaps here than in Oxford; and the readiness with which the glamour of antiquity is attached to a parvenu institution; these yells were not in existence twenty years ago; now, one would suppose they were coeval with the eternal hills, to hear our students talk of them and of similar Americanisms. After every violent hustle of freshmen by Second Year men, there are always to be found some naïve members of each year who come forward with obvious sincerity, and in the tones of injured innocence explain that they had understood that these "formalities"—I take back what I said, and I admit the keen sense of humour of our men—were part of the immemorial academic course, countenanced, if not prescribed, by the authorities.

I mean that the same alphabetical yells continue now from year to year; the same inquiries about who is all right, who says so, and who is who that he should have the right to say so—it all continues rock-based upon student conservatism—the conservatism of yesterday—even though to the alien ears of age the humour seems somewhat exhausted, though the sparkle has effervesced away, though the taste thereof has become stale, flat, and unprofitable.

(6) There is another feature of our student life which derives immediately from the United States—the love of secret societies. The masonic lodges of manhood are anticipated by the Greek Letter societies of our universities (to whom I render this homage that they are the strongest teachers of the Greek alphabet left among us). The secrets are as innocuous, no doubt, as the secrets of masonry; but the institutions in question are a feature of contrast between the universities here and in the Mother Land. In the

mild and heavy air of Oxford, nothing so dark and so aggressive as a secret society—in my time at least—arose; nothing so mysterious and ambitious could appeal to the phlegmatic good-nature of the boys there gathered.

(7) But where there are secret societies, there are suspicions; and if clouds have gathered and relations are strained, whether between students and faculty or students and students, then there is suspicion everywhere; Paris nor St. Petersburg is more a hotbed of rumour and surmise; and nothing, not the simplest incident, but is straightway distorted by the lively imagination of our zealots, and we see men as trees walking.

There is no electric current of suspicion in the heavy-paced wits of Oxford boys and no electricity in the mild and heavy air of Oxford and the south-west of England. You have heard of the Canadian boy who went to Clifton College and ventured, in the course of a lesson on electricity, to interpolate the practical experience of a Canadian, and to explain how he himself in winter by rubbing his feet on the carpet of a drawing-room in Toronto, had drawn an electric spark from his finger to light the gas. “Boy,” said his master, “leave the room; we want no liars here.”

(8) But the air of this continent is full of electricity and our zealots are so full of zeal as to be near akin sometimes to fanatics; our students are capable of becoming “sea-green incorruptibles,” as severe as Robespierre himself; our temperature has Gallicized our temperament. Idealists, they may become as cruel as he in their idealism. Why, a few months ago we had a little student fracas between year and year, and we contrived to lay our hands upon a few disturbers of the peace; only a few; no worse than the rest; just those whom chance threw into our hands. But when

we proposed some mild exemplary penalty, why these idealists were shocked at our injustice. Were there not a hundred guilty, and where were the ninety? All must be punished equally; let justice be done though a whole year be rusticated; never let the fraction suffer for the whole. "Punish me too, O my father," was the pathetic cry; "punish all or none," was the cruel dilemma.

(9) And, therefore, I have fancied, as I let fall before, that there is a certain lack of humour in the Canadian undergraduate. He takes himself and other things so seriously, that sometimes there seems more humour—paradox though it be—in the mild and heavy air of Oxford, and in the heavy-footed wits of her good-natured boys. I think there is too much humour there to rebel against chance and fate and luck and the law of haphazard that governs this world of circumstance and opportunity; they are too humorous also to criticize seriously their lectures and lecturers. Of course the lectures are "tommy-rot"; they do not need to be told that; but it does not occur to them to protest seriously against attendance. For in their hearts there is a humour which finds its natural food in the freaks of fate and chance; a humorous humility, too, which whispers that probably the lectures are good enough for them and that each college has the lecturers it deserves. Still less does it occur to them to criticize the authorities because they punish the men they catch and do not wait, before punishing, to catch the whole college; these humorists do not ask for ideal justice; it is well enough for the lecture-room; they have heard about it in Plato; it will become a bore if it is to be heard outside the lecture-room also. Now is it a sign of youth or of maturity, this humorous humility? And that demand for ideal justice, is that a sign of maturity or of youth?

(10) But I have said nothing yet of *the* difference



between Oxford and Toronto ; there, certainly Toronto is the more mature. The Canadian student is a man of business ; he has to weigh well the value of money ; he knows it only too well. I have never yet forgotten the astonishment with which I learned twenty-five years ago that even a theological student at Toronto could run a joint-stock company. The boys at Oxford are cheated by their tradesmen and their servants ; they pay too much for everything at their shops, and their servants drink their wine and take away the broken meats after each meal, and it is not “ gentlemanly,” forsooth, to “ kick ” (unless the Rhodes scholars have altered all this by this time) ; their boat-club, too, is cheated, and they call in an older man, some don or lecturer, to manage its finances for them. But in our universities the Faculty would often do well to hand over their club-finances to a student ; and the catering for a dining-room, if economy were the only question, might well be handed over to a committee of students.

How different the mild and heavy air of Oxford in these respects ! The students there are living in the City Beautiful ; many of them are studying another City Beautiful, the Callipolis of Plato ; and so deep has the beauty of these two cities, the city of their leisure and the city of their lectures, passed into the lives of some of them at least, the most sensitive, that when they emerge from Oxford into the light of common day, they seem as though they can never become practical men. They look with eyes of wistful wonder at life’s strange and sordid sights ; they seem like zoologists studying a new and repellent fauna ; they give their opinions as though in Plato’s Republic, not as though among the dregs of London. And many a man suffers through the rest of life, because he has loved not wisely, but too well, and has drunk too deeply of the unpractical life of beautiful Oxford.



(11) Our Canadian students are not only practical men, they are often also practical politicians. A Premier of Ontario once called for the academic man in politics. Poor man ! I told him that the trouble was that the academic man had made his mark too deep in politics already ; that there was no device of ballot-switching in which our students could not give pointers to politicians ; that no election to the Legislature was equal in its devices to the devices of a Second Year student for switching the tickets to a freshman reception to which he was not invited ; that no “ roorbachs ” before a political election were as ingenious as the “ roorbachs ” printed and scattered through our academic halls, on the morning of an election to the Executive of the Literary and Scientific Society. But in Oxford, in my time at any rate, even the simplest canvassing for votes at the elections of the Oxford Union counted as an offence against their Draconic and Platonic code of electoral ethics.

Perhaps, indeed, this is the excuse for some of our electoral corruption ; that it is only the belated echo of high-spirited, reckless, rollicking youth and of academic horse-play. I am told that some of our noted political workers in Ontario politics are admirable people in private life, straight and loyal ; that they only seem a strange sort of people in politics, because it has never occurred to them that politics is anything but a jovial game ; a game of skill and bluff, in which the only object is to win. Parsons and purists, prigs and pedants may fancy that the good of the country is at stake ; but these light-hearted gamblers do not stop to notice such poltroonery ; it is a game of skill, and ballots are the counters ; and the object is to manipulate them without the knowledge of the other side. These men are like the great political boss in Booth Tarkington's inimitable story. It is poor consolation, perhaps, to the lovers of our

university, that the students of our university should excel in such games ; but it may be some consolation to the serious lovers of the country that some part of its glaring evil—political corruption—is only the product of the reckless exuberance of youth, prolonged abnormally into maturer life.

Much of what I have been saying suggests to me—if it is a subject germane to this talk—the reason why our students go to Oxford in small numbers, and in much larger numbers to Chicago ; to be Germanized and Americanized there rather than Anglicized. It is more prudent generally ; it is better business, wiser policy, to go to Chicago ; it opens more doors and brings chairs more easily. [All of this was true when I said it : it has ceased to be true to-day, it is a closed chapter.] And yet sometimes I am pleased, as an Englishman, to fancy that I see a compensation for the few who go to Oxford. I mean a more real impression made upon them by Oxford than by Chicago. I am pleased to see, or fancy that I see, that Chicago has added to their information and their zest for information, but has otherwise left no mark ; while Oxford has also set its mark on the outward man and has impressed itself on manners as well as mind. This is but superficial, it may be said. Ah, yes ! all things are superficial in education except character ; and that, I suppose, is made before Oxford or Chicago gets a chance, by home and mothers and fathers, or by ancestors long forgotten or unknown, who being dead yet speak within us, and are our subconscious or subliminal selves. But, comparing superficial things with things superficial, there is something to be said for the university which reaches manners alike and mind, though both be superficial. (The mind is a superficial thing and a man's intellectual life is often on the surface. Scratch the university student and you find the natural man, or Tartar ; as he was before his

education began, and as he is when, for the moment, it is forgotten or not in question. His intellectual life is often a closed, water-tight compartment, quite apart from his real self.) But the British universities, I think, reach a little wider, or shall I say a little deeper, and affect also that lower surface of life and those deeper levels where lie manners, and bearing, and tone of mind and atmosphere. And if these things, too, are superficial ; if “manners” do not make the man now as once they did ; if the Latin word *mores* can no longer be translated by one English word, but divides into “manners” and “character,” yet the connexion between these two is still real though vague ; and the university which reaches “manners” as well as mind comes nearer at least to reaching “character” also than that which reaches mind alone.

(12) But there is another feature in our Ontario University which it would be unpardonable to pass over ; so much difference does it imply between Toronto and Oxford, at any rate the Oxford of my days ; and probably, though in a lesser degree, the Oxford of to-day. In Oxford there were no women students ; the average undergraduate met no women of education and refinement after he left his home till he returned thither. Those undergraduates, again, were many of them men of superfluous leisure and wealth, and they lived in a city of old civilization, with the concomitants thereof ; that is, women so poor and miserable and so crushed by conditions, as lightly, because life was heavy, to sell themselves. There were, therefore, a few men—only a few, I think—who were conspicuously demoralized ; who became mere beasts of prey and passage. University co-education is a difficult question (which I should be sorry to discuss at the end of a short talk), but at least I think it contributes, together with the general happiness and high standards of comfort and the self-respect of the women of this country, to save

our universities from producing such men, and the streets about our universities from the presence of such women. It would not be fair to claim a double portion of original virtue for the undergraduates of Canada, and a double portion of original sin for the men of Great Britain—virtue and vice, as the historians of Rome record, are matters of opportunity and circumstance—but that our happier conditions in this respect are only circumstance, is no reason against our rejoicing in them, and no hindrance to the virtue that flows directly therefrom. Greater virtue, if not the cause, is at least the result of our better conditions.

And just as many sound and wholesome habits of body and mind may be traced to a fear of Hell ; and are none the less salutary and antiseptic, in spite of that homely origin, so our healthier condition in this matter of respect for women, is none the less fruitful of virtue and mental health, because the virtue derives from that humble yet fertile source of poor human virtue, plain circumstance. In that circumstance is included the system of co-education.

But after all, in whichever university one lives, Oxford or Toronto, his would be a graceless and unsympathetic nature which could not reap satisfaction from the atmosphere in which he lives, whether it be the somewhat electrical and feverish atmosphere of this continent, or the mild and heavy air of Oxford. Youth is, after all, largely the same in each climate ; *coelum non animum mutant*. There is the same boundless generosity and good-nature in all young men ; they have not reached those latter days of life which are to be without natural affection ; they retain idealism, faith, hope, and charity ; nay, religion itself—among its other bulwarks—has a mighty if subjective bulwark here, that it also seems one of the many voices of youth, indestructible while youth survives. And in the presence of all this youth, and faith, and hope, and



charity, and religion, who is there who would not be happy and would not admit that his lines had fallen in pleasant places ? I at least have met with forbearance, with good-humour, with trust and confidence unstinted, through twenty-five long years ; and the harshest judgment I think which I have been provoked to pass upon Canadian youth, after an inter-year fraecas unusually exacerbated and exasperated, was a certain definition of a student which I submitted to the students of the University of Toronto for their consideration some time ago. I suggested to them that the definition of a student might not improperly run somewhat as follows : “ A student is a being all compact of exeellent intentions and unfortunate results.”

That is not a harsh judgment nor a damning definition ; it is not the charge of a hanging judge. Nay, when, on the wrong side of fifty, I begin to look anxiously around me for some definition of myself and my peers, some definition which shall not discourage us too deeply for the remaining years of deelining health and the slackening struggle against senility and fate, I begin to think that I shall be more than satisfied for myself and for my ageing friends, if we can yet contrive to earn for ourselves that ironical definition, that we, too, are still compact, even in our age, of exeellent intentions, albeit of ever less and less result.

I HAVE reached the age and have gathered the experience when I may fairly review fifty years of life spent in the Universities of Oxford and Toronto, and note the changes which half a century have wrought in academic circumstances and in public and private life generally.

*ἄνθρωπος συμφορά*, said Herodotus, the most poetic, imaginative and philosophic of Greeks, the most poetic, imaginative and philosophic of nations (1. 32). Every man of us is a line or a paragraph or a comma or a question mark it may be, in the chapter of accidents; it may be so: but even so, even though we be the creatures of circumstance and the sport of chances beneficent, or merely ironical or positively adverse, that need not prevent us from understanding and appreciating the changes of wind and weather which have carried the ship this way or that and brought it into its haven, however distant and unforeseen and unintended, have brought it into the haven where it *is*, whether it would be there or elsewhere.

First and foremost we are all aware of a certain shrinkage in the world of our days in many different senses and to many unlike issues.

There has been, according to science, a certain literal physical shrinkage of our planet itself; the crust of the earth is said to be shrinking all the time; but that is another story and not for me to understand or explain.

But we have all known and understood the geographical and political shrinkage of the last fifty years ; distance has, in fact, been annihilated.

When I came to Canada in 1880 I was imported on a small, rather smelly and rather ratty steamer, belonging to a line long since absorbed, from a then distant Oxford ; to-day Oxford is not distant : a score and more of my colleagues to-day are come to Toronto from Oxford or from Cambridge, but most of them have come to Toronto only via Oxford or via Cambridge ; have come *back* to Toronto from the two English universities. They were Canadians first of our own university, and then went on from us to Oxford and Cambridge for further training : and so back to us. The shrinkage of distance, with the increase of steamship speed, size and number, has made the educational tie between Canada and Great Britain very much closer than it was ; Oxford and Cambridge are represented on our staff much more numerously than they used to be, and yet our professors and lecturers are much more largely Canadian-born, Canadian-bred and Canadian-taught than they were in 1880.

The two great and opposite evils of a Canadian university staff, that the staff should be aliens, imported when they are too old to take root easily in a new soil, ignorant of the land in which they are to live and of the students whom they are to teach ; or the other evil, that the staff should be wholly and solely natives of the land, knowing nothing of older lands, and of the more developed and specialized learning of older universities, exposed to all the dangers of in-breeding and to the sterility of a narrow nationalism ; both evils have been simultaneously averted and removed by one and the same force, by this shrinkage of distance and this greater speed and facility of travel ; it is a change wholly for the good.

There are other shrinkages, however, not so satis-

factory to some of us ; to myself in particular. Democracy has increased all over the world and has increased the University of Toronto ; but the increase in quantity has impaired the quality ; in my direction at least.

Fifty years ago our students were a picked minority, coming from a few, a very few, schools and from a small and educated class, and going out of the University into a small and educated class ; coming from the homes of lawyers, clergy and doctors or else from the pick of the farms ; and themselves going out into law or medicine or the churches or the schools when they took their degrees.

Furthermore, they studied in the University the old and few and compact, disciplinary and cultural subjects ; classics, mathematics and philosophy. They entered the University with a considerable knowledge of the first two, classics and mathematics ; they had not many rival courses to prevent their continued study of these two old subjects ; or their enthusiastic study of their new subject—very natural to most of them, as men of Scots ancestry—philosophy. Philosophy was *the* popular subject with the majority of our students in the early eighties, owing to the gift for teaching of the late Professor George Paxton Young, and to the absence of other and competing subjects, outside classics and mathematics. Everything is different to-day.

Our students come from every sort of home and every sort of school, and go out into every sort of employment ; no longer into the learned professions as they are called, law, medicine, the church or teaching : more and more into business. They prefer to receive what is called “ vocational ” training as opposed to cultural or disciplinary training ; they want a training which will give them at once a foothold on the special ladder they propose to climb ; the



old course in classics or mathematics or philosophy gave no such foothold, except to the few who proposed to become teachers of mathematics or classics.

Classics, mathematics and philosophy are superseded for the majority of students to-day by economics or by commerce and finance ; or in a smaller number of cases by industrial chemistry or physical chemistry ; or even—in some of the American universities—by courses in salesmanship or in journalism or advertising ; in some of the new British universities by courses in brewing. Economics was introduced into the University curriculum by Mr. Edward Blake, with the idea that the coming lawyers and leaders of Canada ought to know more of the economic problems and economic needs and economic possibilities of this vast but undeveloped country. If Mr. Blake could have foreseen the Great War he could have strengthened his case by English instances and English failures ; the British Government at the outbreak of the Great War was made up of classical scholars and historians, who knew nothing of economics or of science, still less of the point where economics and science meet. Mr. Asquith and Sir Edward Grey did not know that the explosives used in war depend on cotton ; they made no attempt to shut cotton out of Germany : Sir William Ramsay, the chemist, said it could have been done and would have shortened the war. It is a good typical instance where statesmanship and politics require a knowledge of science and chemistry, and where Oxford men bred on classics and history are evidently badly handicapped : or they would not have sent out to Canada in 1914 agents to arrange for the manufacture of tri-nitro-toluol who knew nothing of the substance they wanted manufactured.

But to return, economics—thanks to Mr. Blake—became and continued to be for several years the

“popular” course in the University ; it superseded philosophy ; to be itself superseded to-day by a later course on the same lines but more so, “commerce and finance” : the best brains of our students to my sorrow are turned, I am told, into this channel and I get only a small portion of them ; those rigid conservatives—most of them from the farm—who take a subject because it is the old subject and because it is a very difficult subject ; and because it is a subject in which, if a man is to go far, he must be caught young. But here at present our schools present an obstacle ; the system of our public schools prevents our children from being caught young, for the study of foreign languages, ancient or modern. Mr. Blake, as it happened, did not take the same stock in chemistry as in economics : he spoke of it rather hastily and amateurishly as a subject chiefly remarkable for a succession of flashes, bangs and smells : but he could not prevent its growth : it has so large a hold on lucrative employment, that our graduates in chemistry to-day very rarely go into our schools to teach chemistry ; they can earn better salaries in business : they leave the teaching of chemistry to the graduates of Queen’s.

Obviously students coming from all sorts of homes and looking to all sorts of careers and trained in every sort of school, and not in the two or three picked schools of the seventies of the last century, Upper Canada College and Galt High School chiefly, are no longer equally well equipped with the students of fifty years ago, in classics and mathematics : there is a shrinkage in culture and in mental discipline. Professor Baker of the department of mathematics complains that the students of to-day know less and work less (especially less at the old subjects) : the department of classics echoes his complaint. Of course they know less : to-day every one can read, but no one

knows what to read ; and there are no standards of reading ; so that the student just reads the newspapers, "the matutinal rumour and the vespertinal lie"—"for these are the new dark ages of the penny and popular press"—and lowers his standards both of style and subject-matter still further ; extremes meet ; it comes to the same thing as if no one could read ; when every one can write, no one has standards of writing, and the student writes for newspapers and the *Varsity* comes out six times a week, with six blunders in a paragraph and by no means all of them printers' errors : it comes to the same thing as if no one could write. It may all cure itself in the end, as all the ignorances of democracy may conceivably cure themselves in the end ; but for the time there is a marked shrinkage in the quality of reading and writing, and it becomes a proverb even, that democracy means quantity in everything over quality, a vast amount of superficial knowledge, poor reading and inferior writing : "the cult of incompetence" as the Frenchman called it. "A monstrous amount of water to a very little sack" in Shakespearian language ; "watered stock" in the language of the Stock Exchange.

I have said nothing in this retrospect of University life of the effects of co-education. They are curious. I well recollect the horror of some of my elder colleagues when it was forced upon them ; their expectations of unutterable scandals ; these were based in part upon a priori considerations of the desperate wickedness of human nature when young men and women were thrown together ; in part upon the experience of some Swiss universities into which emancipated and Bolshevik young women from Russia had been admitted ; upon anything and everything, in short, except upon a knowledge of the young women of Ontario. The result has been that

the evils prophesied are still only prophecies without knowledge ; but, on the other hand, evils unprophesied and unforeseen have in a measure followed.

A general slackening of intellectual keenness and a general quickening of the pulse of social life, and a large share of that craze for dancing and mild flirtation which is a feature of all modern universities ; how can it be otherwise when a certain percentage of young women frankly enter a university to have a good time and to dance three or four times a week in the pursuit of education ; to dance themselves into education. Some of them at home would have had the dismal prospect of Dorcas societies, of charitable bazaars, of a weekly church service, perhaps of a weekly prayer meeting ; at the University they can contrive three or four dances a week, some of them : and all of them can lay to their soul the flattering unction—the most quaint and unfounded of all student delusions—that education consists really in social functions and in rubbing off each other's angles in a waltz or fox-trot. The poor things ! They have got hold of the truth that education is not merely reading books, but is often gained by meeting people unlike oneself—hearing other theories of life and other experiences of life than that of one's own circle. They have magnified this truth into the palpable nonsense that education is gained by chattering with untrained intelligences of their own class and kind ; the net result being, I think, that the men live lives more wholesome and innocent than the men of the old-fashioned universities before 1885, but less intellectual ; while the women suffer by developing, quite unnecessarily and prematurely, those gifts of tact and social charm which Nature has given them with her own punctual hand, and which do not require forcing or encouragement ; which are better without the precocious forcing of a co-educational university.



Mothers who know all this are apt to send their daughters to Smith College or Wellesley, instead of to their own provincial University of Ontario : they are afraid that their daughters—like Hippoclidés—will dance away their marriage. But the daughters don't read Greek and cannot be scared by Hippoclidés' fate.

A smaller illustration of the same tendencies is apparent in the matter of drinking. The students before co-education sometimes drank heavily, like German professors. The students after co-education sometimes forbade and forswore and forwent liquor altogether and had no difficulty in enforcing their own prohibition law, except, occasionally, upon senior graduates. The O.T.A. has slightly modified this admirable condition, as was to be expected, for the worse ; it is an affront to a young man to be treated like a child and forbidden the use of liquor. He resents coercion and he is not interested in the weaker brethren ; he reverts—merely to assert his liberty—to the earlier habits before 1885 and flourishes a pocket flask in triumph. It is a small matter—a tempest in a wine-glass, so to speak ; and is inevitable ; it does not settle the problem of the O.T.A. one way or the other. It only increases the general childishness of the modern student, which for good and for evil is one of his marked characteristics. Even babies in their baby-pens hardly enjoy mere noise more heartily. Education—said Aristotle profoundly and profanely—is the rattle of youth : the noisy weapon which keeps youth out of mischief and affords a harmless interest ; as a rattle to a baby : if he were alive to-day and in Toronto he would say that the student's love of rattles produced more noise than education.

A further result of all this childishness and social festivities is that in some American universities the most important functionary is the unhappy man who

presides over this side of university life; the Dean of Dancing he deserves to be dubbed, or the Judge of Jamborees. He is actually styled with more decorum and concealment, the Dean of Social Functions. His office throws a strong sidelight on the modern democratic university. Mr. Julian Huxley is sanguine enough to anticipate that ultimately his importance will be curbed by psycho-analysis: that the psycho-analysts will succeed in imposing such tests at entrance, instead of the present easy matriculation test, as will rule out a large number of matriculants as congenitally incapable of profiting from the higher learning, as being in fact little better than "morons," one of the phrases of their technical jargon. But to Mr. Huxley a university President of the Middle West not unnaturally objected, that he could not hope to draw his large yearly grant from the Legislature unless he were permitted to argue that higher education is a natural right of every boy and girl, "moron" or not. It is the very pretty problem—present everywhere—not only in the Middle West: can yearly grants be expected from a Legislature if a high standard be demanded at matriculation and the university doors be closed to those would-be students who do not belong to the aristocracy of talent? But, anyhow, a stiff matriculation is a more promising test than the psycho-analyst's so-called "tests of intelligence." Mr. Fisher, who has been Minister of Education in England, told me that the one man who could never pass tests of quick thinking, who was always last at cross-word puzzles, buried cities, jigsaws, riddles, and similar nonsense, was the best scholar and best thinker of his age, Lord Acton. There is a considerable difference between quick thinking and sound thinking; the people who develop slowly develop furthest; the youthful prodigy—like the infant prodigy—is apt to develop into a fool; like

that famous child who made a fortune on the stage by the age of ten or twelve (Master Betty) and then went to the University of Cambridge and became a fool and died a fool at the age of eighty, a country squire, in the odour of dullness and fertilizers. That is why men still maintain an intellectual competition with women. They are not half as quick in thought, but they are more patient and more thorough.

There are other fads of recent educators besides intelligence tests, which soon discredit themselves. President Eliot of Harvard was a precursor in university questions of President Wilson of Princeton in world politics. He introduced "self-determination" into the university curriculum, as President Wilson into the nationalities of Europe, and with the same chaotic results. Many students who had brains capable of hard work, and of appreciating slowly and profiting by higher mathematics or higher classics or philosophy or history, were tempted into soft courses and even permitted to make the necessary number of "units," by adding a little course in book-keeping to a smaller course in Greek sculpture, and then crowning the structure by a coping-stone of elocution (or the vocal interpretation of literature, as it was called) combined with a smattering of experimental psychology, or psycho-physics: they registered, that is, the increase in the heart-beats of the youthful heart, when confronted with different colours, the scarlet or crimson, e.g. which always appeals to the heart of the nursemaid. President Wilson has made the map of Europe a sort of patchwork or crazy quilt of small nationalities. President Eliot made the curriculum a patchwork or crazy quilt of "electives." Plato is partly to blame; he introduced the kindergarten method of study as play; but sometimes the best studies for a man are very hard work indeed and seem for a long time against the grain: perhaps

remain to the end against the grain ; but they retain a moral discipline of patience and obedience and effort, even when they never reach the intellectual discipline which attracted and obsessed Plato, to the neglect of the other discipline, just as valuable, perhaps much more valuable, to anyone but an intellectual Greek, the discipline of the will and character.

There are other changes in universities which have marked the last fifty years ; I can just remember a time when the heads of colleges and universities and large schools in England were necessarily clergymen, and theologians even sometimes ; like the first Provost of Trinity College in Toronto ; then a later time when such heads were necessarily Greek scholars and when Greek scholarship—as one Greek scholar said—not merely afforded its possessor an ineffable sense of superiority to the vulgar herd, but also often furnished “posts of not inconsiderable emolument, even in this world” ; bishops of the Anglican church were in those days appointed sometimes for their Greek scholarship ; they made poor bishops but good editors of *Æschylus*.

Then came a time when such heads of colleges represented modern history or mathematics or political science ; and now we have reached the fourth stage when no academic distinction is necessarily required of such a man ; but all stress may be laid on business ability and organizing capacity ; when a man may become a university president, in the U.S. especially, or a chancellor, on the same grounds on which he is made the president of a railway or the chairman of a great manufacturing trust ; when the president or chancellor of a university may be also president of a railway, because he can organize or because he can advertise or because (like the late Lord Northcliffe) he is very successful in propaganda and publicity. “Every one can read,” said Lord Northcliffe, “there



must be a great opportunity for rubbishy reading-matter: I'll supply it," and he started the *Daily Mail*.

There is a shrinkage therefore necessarily in the value assigned to academic training, both for the students in a university and for the university's president and chancellor; a shrinkage in the amount of academic knowledge possessed by the students and by their chiefs.

It has been the good luck of the University of Toronto that its Governors have never gone outside the academic circle for a President, nor chosen a man who has not the capacity to teach, and the ambition to be a teacher, and the genuine love of learning, and a first-rate academic record.

Of course you may occasionally get more faith in the life of scholarship, more idealism of thought, more reverence for thinking from the very man who has by force of circumstances been driven into commercial life and debarred from academic life in his own case; it is a great stroke of luck for a university to receive such a man as President or Chancellor, but that is another story; you cannot count upon it, though it certainly sometimes happens, as in happy McGill.

It follows from all this that in this age to keep Greek alive is a hard task; bets were made forty years ago that in thirty years there would be no Greek in the University of Toronto; but a dead language sometimes (like Charles II) takes an unconscionable time in dying; one method of reviving the failing patient is the Scots method, now employed by the University of Toronto, of beginning the study of Greek in the university for those students who have waked up to their need of it, but who, owing to the deficiencies of their schools, have entered without it. They begin Greek with us and catch up the ordinary pass-Greek classes

in their third year, and take the third and fourth year with the ordinary pass-Greek students.

Such students do not go in most cases obviously very far in Greek ; it is like a track through the midnight woods beneath a fitful moon : *quale per obscuram lunam sub luce maligna est iter in silvis* ; but Heaven forbid that I should say that they get nothing for their pains ; they get all the discipline for imagination, for energy, for patience, for will, for character and self-control which is involved in the puzzling out for oneself the sense of an ancient, unknown but unsurpassed language ; and providentially their numbers are too few to make it worth anyone's while to publish an English translation of the Greek selections which they read. They must dig up their peptonized Herodotus for themselves, and there is no better digging and reading ; in the second place they get all the knowledge involved in learning the genesis, on one side, especially the scientific side, of our own language ; in learning the endless affiliations of all modern science and all technical language, especially medicine, biology, and applied science, but of all science generally, with ancient Greece ; they come to understand the Greek they have been speaking all their lives without understanding it ; the vocabulary of daily life with its incessant Greek references to telephones and autos and telegrams and cinemas ; to biology, theology, geology, mathematics ; to pantomimes and pantisocracy and democracy, autocracy, aristocracy, etc., etc., and the thousand and one other Greek-English words of modern daily life. But they can hardly expect in their short course to get much appreciation of good literature ; they can hardly expect as much as that from their smattering of Greek, even though the language and literature of Greece be at the root of a large part of our best literature and of almost all our scientific language.

In all this I am only saying that the universities have undergone the same changes as the whole world and as the parliaments of the world have undergone in the last half-century. Both universities and parliaments were once concerned largely with Church questions ; the rights of the state churches—the state church in Ireland, c.g.—and of nonconformists ; the rights of nonconformists in Oxford and Cambridge, e.g. When these questions had been settled, the universities and the parliaments took up what may be called metaphysical questions ; the rights of men and women to admission to universities or to citizenship and the franchise ; the limits of liberty, the limits of authority ; the rights of working men to votes ; how far that right should go and what should be the property qualification of a vote, and the like ; the rights of working men to combine in unions : and after that, but of the same character, the question whether women should have votes, and at what age. Most of these questions were settled by the middle of the nineteenth century in favour of a low qualification and a fairly general franchise, much more easily than they would have been settled later, because it was then still supposed that anyhow parliament had no active powers, only passive and negative powers : Law and Parliament were supposed merely to aim at the protection of life and property and to have no right to interfere with the natural rights of the individual to do as he pleased so long as he did not interfere with other people's life and property, and a man could be drunk on the street so long as he walked fairly straight. But when Socialism appeared and spread and Parliament and Law began to be paternal, and claimed the right to interfere with men's rights over their own wives and children, began to protect married women, and to forbid child labour and to insist on children's rights to education and to free

education, when Law began to aim at the better housing and feeding of the masses, and for this purpose to tax the rich for the support and education of the poor, and for their insurance against accidents and old age and unemployment, why then, obviously, a vote became worth ten times or twenty times what it was before, and Parliament, which had given the vote to working men under the impression that it did not mean much, became the servant of the masses instead of, what it had been before in England, an upper-class club divided nominally between Liberals and Conservatives, but in reality a club representing the same upper class and never really divided against itself. It was in those days, like the universities of those days, a preserve of the upper and upper-middle classes, and English parliamentary life was very staid and peaceful because there was not yet any division in Parliament between the "haves" and "have nots" (no minister when his party lost office was compelled in those days to become again a working man); nor even yet a complete division between "haves" and "have nots" among the classes who had a "vote." But to-day universities and parliaments and whole nations are concerned neither with Church questions, nor with metaphysical questions, but with questions of bread and butter, with material questions, with the finding of a livelihood for their clients, with vocational education, with questions of freight rates, of electric power, of water power, the control of harbours (like Fiume) by one nation or by another, the questions of emigration and immigration, the admission of alien races and of coloured races to compete with a native race; the rights of coloured races and dependencies to self-government and self-determination, the rights of geographical units (like Ireland) to govern themselves through a local majority; and all the questions of the standard of living to be maintained, the prices to be



paid, the minimum wages to be paid, the maximum hours of labour to be permitted; the securing of a livelihood for every one; of equality of opportunity for every one—at any rate for every one with good natural talent—to better himself by the exercise of his natural talent.

And all these questions point to a step further, though parliaments are afraid to take that further step and to face those further questions, the most difficult of all questions—the question, whether the State can contrive to find food for every mouth born into it; whether it can spread a table for every would-be banqueter who presents himself at the feast of life; without regard to the number of uninvited and unwelcome guests; unwelcome to the guests already seated, unwelcome often to the very parents who have brought them into the world against the principles of Malthus—if the State is to feed all who come, must it not first of all be permitted to limit and prescribe their number? must it not be permitted to control marriage and population, if it is to find food and a career for all its citizens? At present, rather than face these questions, parliaments wash their hands of them and put them off with palliatives, trusting to private propagandists of birth-control to head off the problem before it becomes acute; and meanwhile take up small and minor matters, such as the question now exercising Toronto and Hamilton and Canada generally: Shall the State guarantee every citizen's deposits in a chartered bank? It is a very small but a very significant question, illustrating how far paternal government and Socialism have advanced; the O.T.A. is a larger but a similar question. The State is exercising the functions of a church, the moral direction of its people, nay much more than the functions of a church; for church legislation has been for centuries with us merely per-

missive legislation and only counsels of perfection. But to-day we render unto Cæsar—for the sake of the weaker brethren and for the sake of women and children—the duties which used to be regarded as duties only required of us by God ; and therefore—to many men's minds—to be neglected safely, the duty of temperance, or even of abstention itself, for the sake of the weaker brethren and for the welfare of women and children. [This was written, of course when the O.T.A.—the Ontario Temperance Act—was still in force.]

You have all seen these changes and this vast extension of the questions which now confront universities and parliaments.

The thing may be put in another way : once upon a time in the ages of faith the Pope controlled a large tract of Italy directly, and indirectly other lands as well ; other churches, later on, controlled other masses of men and women. Parliaments succeeded to the powers of the Pope and the churches and the kings, and every one, for a short time, came to look to parliament for the millennium.

But to-day the faith in parliaments has naturally and inevitably waned ; the working man in Russia, the middle classes in Italy ; the soldiers in Spain, Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey, and Persia ; general chaos in China and Albania, have superseded parliaments ; people don't trust elected members of parliament ; they want to govern the country themselves by direct action, or by a few dictators who represent their class and their minority.

In the British Empire and the U.S. there is less confusion, it is true, but even in England and in other English-speaking countries there is something like a three-cornered fight in progress to control legislation and more or less to supersede Parliament ; by labour and the working-men on one side—the I.W.W. in the

U.S. and the strikers of 1926 in England—by big business corporations on a second side (especially in the U.S.) and sometimes on a third side (in England, France, Italy, and the U.S. and Canada), by millionaire journalists and newspaper proprietors: none of the three combatants, neither labour nor manufacturers nor millionaire journalists representing pure democracy, representing the government of a country, that is, in the general interests of all its inhabitants, but representing, each of them, only a class or even only a private interest and private ambition. Pure democracy seems to be still too difficult an ideal to aim at seriously; the world is in a chaos and a welter, worst in China or Albania, but only worse in degree; and civilization is in danger of breaking down altogether with nation divided against nation and class against class, and parliaments unable to function, and parliamentary government discredited, being split up into several incompatible groups, as in Italy, France and Germany, and in a lesser degree in English-speaking communities. The only ideals which seem to promise much help against this chaos are a League of Nations, and, as a first step to that, a League of English-speaking Nations: and, as a step to that first step, we have already the smaller League of Nations known as the British Empire.

But the League of Nations and even the other two minor leagues referred to, seem almost to require for their full realization and fruition a yet greater miracle first: a revival of religion, that is of Christianity (which is the only religion of promise), a revival of the religion of peace on earth and goodwill to men. Never was such a revival so needed; but it is not very perceptible yet, though the students of all universities and the women of all countries are beginning to work together for it. They are hindered by the mighty power of ancient sentiment, national and ecclesiastical senti-

ment, and the magic of old names. Peoples do not like to be reconciled to other peoples or to unite their churches with other churches, when by so doing they seem to cast a slight upon precious names of the past hallowed by a thousand sacred memories. The League of Nations is a form of internationalism, and the revival of Christianity is a sort of internationalism. But internationalism is a goal extremely difficult of access at present. The Great War has produced—thanks in part to the fanaticism of President Wilson—a new outburst of narrow nationalism in great states alike and in small, in old states and in new ; in France, in Italy, in the U.S., in Ireland and Poland and Roumania and Serbia, in Turkey and in Greece, and in Spain. Great Britain alone is really international and is alone in seeking the good of Europe as a whole. Russia calls herself international but seeks only the good of one class in the world, the labourer of the large cities ; a minority of its people, even though it be a large minority ; the proletariat as it is called.

In an atmosphere like this and a society so divided is a revival of international Christianity possible ? Some people will dismiss the idea at once as absurd : there was never less religion in the world, they will say ; all creeds are loose and relaxed ; all horizons have disappeared ; the world has ceased to believe in God or the soul or a hereafter ; it has come to believe that all ethics, character and conduct depend upon economic progress. Secure a good living, they say, for the masses of men, and their character and conduct will improve *pari passu* ; not otherwise. “How hardly shall a poor man enter into the Kingdom of Heaven,” they say ; “you cannot be a Christian,” they say, on “less than a pound a week.” “Seek first security of employment and an income,” they say, “and all these other things shall be added unto you.” They say that all virtues are luxuries of the



well-to-do ; when a man has made his competence it is time enough to think of virtue, as Phocylides said :

Get on—the world says—first of all get on,  
And then get honour, if it come your way :  
And then at last, when health and strength are gone,  
Get honest also, when you've had your day.

If a man take a narrow view of the world, fix his mind on the disenchantments of the war, on the general disgust with the Peace, on the “recklessness and wretchlessness of most ungodly living,” which for the moment prevail in great capitals, in Berlin or Paris or London, with their crazy night-clubs, it is inevitable that he should take pessimistic views of the chances of Christianity and religion. He has only to consider the yellowness of the Press, the breakdown of marriage, the increase of divorce, the loss of all that continuous discipline in self-control and unselfishness and tolerance and broad-mindedness which was involved in marriage and made of marriage, practically, if not always nominally, a sacrament, and he becomes a pessimist.

But the curious thing is that Christianity was probably never more practised in the world than now when its creeds are so watered down and diminished.

Think of the behaviour of doctors and nurses and Court and Government during the Plague of London : and contrast it with the behaviour we should see in modern doctors and nurses and Court if a plague struck London to-day : there would be heroes and heroines ready in all professions to face the need.

And against even the reckless divorces of to-day it is only fair to set the new and true *camaraderie* which is found to-day between men and women, between young men and young women, old men and old women, old men and young women, young men and old women : there is a real *camaraderie* and friendship

possible, because there are so many people of both sexes no longer over-sexed, no longer obsessed with the filthy bias of sex : I mean the filthier bias : there are many other forms of that bias which are innocent and wholly delightful.

Many old-fashioned people rail at modern churchmen of all churches and say they are "Unitarians"; nothing could be more unjust. If the Unitarian church exists at all (and many Unitarians seem so indifferent to it that they let it be turned into a Browning club), it exists to diminish the authority of Christ and exalt that of God. But the other churches—modernists or fundamentalists, it matters not—agree, if they agree in nothing else, in basing life and religion upon Christ and Christ alone. They believe in a good God, but only because they take Christ's word for it and build Him upon the fashion lived by Christ and preached by Christ; they make their God in Christ's image and on the faith of Christ's faith. They feel that if our Saviour were here to-day He would adapt His words to our ears and our times and say, "Ye believe in me, believe also in God." A religious revival cannot be impossible when the first and greatest of revivalists, the founder of the first and greatest of real religions, the Redeemer of the world—in a real and historical sense—whatever theological senses may be added afterwards—has a larger number of practical followers and of real believers in Him—for and in Himself—than He has ever had since the distant day when He first prophesied, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." It is very easy to be a pessimist at a rough first glance at modern life : it is not easy to remain one.

I say nothing of the unbelief of coteries of literary men and of that large class whom the French call *garnements de lettres*, and of their resistance to Christianity; of men like Mr. H. G. Wells, Mr. Norman Douglas

and Mr. D. H. Lawrence : sober, sensible, God-fearing people do not take literary rebels very seriously, and for one fairly obvious reason among others : they know, being human themselves, how much indulgence is due to literary rebellion ; they know that we are all sore when we restrain ourselves and deny ourselves, and in revenge try to imagine ourselves and depict ourselves to ourselves and to the world as great rebels ; oh yes, terribly free livers and thinkers ; and exaggerate our unbelief and our disobedience, that is, our infidelity, just because we feel the attraction of all this infidelity and grudge God bitterly the unwilling service we are nevertheless still rendering Him and going to render ruefully to the end ; we are unprofitable servants beyond a doubt, but we shall still continue His servants : thousands do : for His service after all, and even as we render it, is truth and freedom from horrid tyrants : but we are sore about it and like to kick and rebel and scoff and let off steam in our writings. Meanwhile the real rebels, who don't rebel in literature but in life, and who keep their rebellion to themselves carefully and out of print, why, many of these, if they were asked, would endorse the God-fearers—the Puritans—and repudiate the literary libertines. “ We can't change now,” they would say, “ we are too old in sin and have defied God and sold ourselves to the Devil too long ; but there is nothing in it, we all know that now well enough. We should be too glad if only at this late hour—but it is too late—our disobedient hearts could be turned to the wisdom of the just and we could escape this weary circle of sinning and repenting, sinning and repenting, sinning and repenting.”

And, after all, no reflecting man wants or ought to want a demonstration of the truth of Christianity ; if it were demonstrated absolutely as a proposition in Euclid, if it were only demonstrated plausibly and on

the basis of probabilities like a proposition in Biology, like evolution, e.g., we should all have the poorer religion. Christianity, if it is anything, is a venture of faith, a speculation of hope, a gamble of love ; if it could be demonstrated to be true why every self-seeker, indifferent at present to it, would in common sense adopt it and treat it as a gilt-edged investment ; and honesty would really become, what profane persons have often called it, the best policy, and straightway true honesty would vanish from the earth and goodness and real religion with it. To prove Christianity is to betray it and destroy it and turn it into intelligent selfishness and long-sighted self-interest ; and Christians would become Jobs—not true Jobs but as the adversary, rather, imagined Job—serving God, but not for naught ; for their cattle and their business and their heaven hereafter ; they would all be bent on making the best of both worlds and they would make the best of neither.



ON Sunday morning, March 3, 1912, with the same absence of ostentation, in the same spirit of reticence and reserve in which he had conducted his life—so far as it was possible for a public man so to conduct his life—was buried Edward Blake, the founder of the Blake Scholarships, the Chancellor for many years of the University of Toronto, Premier at one time of Ontario, later Minister of the Dominion, and the greatest man, in the ordinary human sense of that term, whom Ontario has produced. If in appearance Mr. Blake was a typical Irishman, if in sentiment he retained his passionate love of Ireland to the last, he yet contrived to avoid the defects of those high qualities, the foibles of his race, ostentation, advertisement, insincerity, not less than the more romantic but even more dangerous passion for indulging in the luxury of grief and grievances, for brooding on ancient wrongs, for conjuring up with morbid melancholy the spectres of the past, “of old unhappy far-off things and battles long ago.” These things he put away from him with the sure instinct of a statesman. He was the first Irishman—at least of his party—to describe himself as an Imperialist. Had there been more Blakes his cause would not have progressed so slowly.

“Don Quixote” men have called him : some with regret, some with unfeigned admiration, according to temperament. Don Quixote he was, with the reproach which that name implies for those to whose

eyes and ears the actual, the near, the obvious and the easy furnish a call to duty greater and louder than can be conceived as issuing from the distant, the uncertain and the unknown. Yet so long as man is not a creature merely of calculation and of prudence, and of that intelligence which is often but a mask of enlightened selfishness, but in addition is also susceptible to emotion, impulse, enthusiasm, so long will visionariness such as his excite in the hearts of men respect, affection and love; and even a strange thrill of delight that human nature should still be, even in this practical province, capable of such high emprise, of visions so unworldly. Throughout his life he was marked by a scrupulous delicacy, by a fastidious severity of honour. When he was Premier of Ontario (I have heard it said by a Conservative opponent) the one set of persons who could never hope for office were the members of the Blake family.

When he left the politics of his Province for those of the Dominion he imported into them a similar effort to be honest: honest by himself and by the country. He would not let the country, if he could help it, take any serious step from the pressure of momentary circumstance. He desired that whatever it did should be done deliberately, judicially, looking before and after. It is the curse of politics, especially of party politics, that one must not take "long views." Mr. Blake fought against the curse; and was willing to be submerged in his own little ship attempting to make headway against the flood, rather than spread his sails to every shifting wind, indifferent to what port the wind was taking him.

And then followed the sacrifice with which his name is associated most closely. He gave up his assured position and career in Canada for a forlorn hope in Ireland. He gave up more than that, even. In Ireland itself he gave up old associations, old ties, to

some extent no doubt old friends, for associations, ties and friendship of a different order. "I offer you," said Garibaldi to the Romans in the great days of '48, "I offer you neither pay nor plunder, nor ease nor victory; I offer hunger and thirst, pain and nakedness, wounds, defeat and death: for the liberty of Italy." When all due allowance has been made for the difference between that romantic year and this prosaic age, for the difference between the comparatively happy relations of Great Britain and Ireland, when compared with the annals of that date of distressful Italy, it can hardly be doubted that to Mr. Blake's ears in the nineties there sounded a similar call. To his ears and heart the cause was the same: the cause of liberty and union, a truer union than before. And the man who heard the call and listened, who saw the gleam and followed it, was no enthusiastic boy of twenty, at an age when enthusiasm is natural and abundant, but a man of middle life: a man who had already reached the years when for most men age has now withered and custom staled the fancies and the fervours of youth.

It is the instinct of our race to dwell on character rather than on talent. But Mr. Blake brought to the service of the University, and the Province and the Dominion, not character only but great talents and a very powerful intellect. To the University in particular he was the greatest of intellectual benefactors, the lover of its learning, the founder out of his own purse of its systems of scholarships, the weighty champion who in the dark days of 1890 with the assistance of the Vice-Chancellor, Sir William Mulock, the President, Sir Daniel Wilson, and President (then Professor) Loudon, secured from a sympathetic Legislature the reconstruction of its buildings after the fire.

Mr. Blake recalls to some of us another Don Quixote: a man of wholly different history, associa-

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tions and origin, but allied to him in independence of mind and in the same unquenchable spirit of knight-errantry—Goldwin Smith. It is only part of the usual irony of life that the two knights never understood or appreciated each other, but were emphatically estranged in sympathy and in the visions they conceived of Canada's destiny. Yet to the temperate lookers-on without their divided fervours, but with a more tolerant because more lukewarm heart, to the philosophers of Laodicea, whose temperament will not permit them to be either so hot or so cold, the two men were alike figures to respect and honour: because in a material age and on a material continent and in the specially material mood and epoch of that continent's history—the mood and epoch of nation-building and of material development—each was in his own way an idealist, old in years but young to the end in visions and in dreams. "Where there is no vision the people perish." Ontario will not perish while she produces or enjoys the society of men of that calibre. They stood far apart in life, glancing askance with suspicion at each other. To-day they are united in the great Church Invisible, which is the company of all faithful people, of all who have faith in the ideals of duty.



THE death of Professor James Mavor came as something of a shock to the many friends of his mature years (the friends of his youth were never in Canada, except for flying visits to him: visits such as those made by Professor Patrick Geddes and by Prince Kropotkin; he was nearly forty when he came to Toronto, and of any other man one would have been doubtful whether many new friendships could accrue at that age: but hundreds of new friendships accrued for him). Something as a shock not only because it stirs again the uneasy but obvious question "My turn next?" but also and much more because, though he had reached the ancient span of life—no longer, in these days of medical skill, so rigid a limit as once it was—no one could think of him as old: disguise himself as he would, as an ancient philosopher with a Stoic beard, his mind, his conversation, his very walk, belied the beard: he would plunge across the roaring traffic of our streets and the deadly peril of our street cars with the recklessness of youth: one of the last spectacles afforded by him to Toronto was such a dodging of cars a few weeks ago; one of the last incidents of his Toronto life—a few months back—was a fall resulting from one of these forlorn-hope charges for a receding car. His heart warned him also not to run upstairs: not seldom he ran. He did not measure his modes of life by his heart or his years or his beard: any more than he measured the daytime of his activity

by the hours of daylight. His heart, physically so weak, was spiritually invincible.

The apathy—the languor—the boredom—the ennui—the *ἀπάθεια* which the misguided ancients erected into a philosophic ideal because it was a goal easy and natural to many tired thinkers and philosophers ; which the equally misguided moderns have often found to be their goal—an unwelcome but an inevitable goal—in manhood and in age, not seldom even in their youth, was never a goal of ambition or of fate to his eager mind : there were few things that did not interest him, into which he did not inquire, about which he could not talk with animation and with a knowledge which was remarkable, regard being had to the dimensions of his orbit, so to speak, and to the variety of the topics for which he paused to cast an inquisitive and shrewd eye, as his orbit passed.

Persons narrower in their range sometimes criticized the accuracy of the conclusions reached by him in these wide and varied peregrinations ; no doubt their criticisms were often sound and just ; but there was a certain inconsequence and want of proportion in their point of view ; the shortness of life, the ambiguities of language, and the insolubilities of all science, made it impossible for him or for any man to plumb these separate and distant ocean-depths ; the mystery rather was that he dived so deep and brought up to the surface so much worth bringing.

I have said something of his genius for friendship : it was amazing ; when he first came out here more than thirty years ago and was for the moment an unknown stranger I saw him very often : his was a stimulating mind to know : when he had been here a little longer and was able to exchange my static and mid-Victorian point of view—only too familiar to him already—for the more modern and more con-

genial points of view of artists and architects, of musicians and bankers and men of science, I lost track of him in waters out of my depth and interest, but never without noting again from time to time how much ground he covered, and catching now and again some telling phrase, some vivid epigram, which seemed to me to light up a subject better than it had been lit up before for me : his choice of words was so happy and so penetrating.

There was nothing he did not touch and nothing which he touched which he did not adorn : or if this sounds like the exaggeration of a funeral sermon, of a Greek *περίδειπνον*, I mean nothing academic, nothing serious. He did not include nor profess to include one of the hobbies of this age, and not the least profitable and worthy of its hobbies, the world of sport : I have seen him, out of his infinite good nature and good fellowship, join in a game of rounders—it sounds much better than baseball and is much better—at a house party in the country : it was not his *métier*. I saw him on the same occasion when I happened to lose my balance and fall out of a boat and out of my depth, out of the same infinite good nature seeking to retrieve me with a boat-hook in a fashion which was more drastic and more dangerous to me than helpful. I remember how, at the same house party, he was the only guest who could expound the meaning of the old and rare word *sal-magundi*. I remember finally, to round up this side of the picture, a delightfully characteristic comment which he passed on a fishing party in the Highlands to which he had been invited for his intellect's sake : the other fishermen were also great conversationalists and he enjoyed their conversation as it deserved. “It was delightful,” he said, “it would have been splendid but for the damned fishing.” He was not a sport : but there is one game in which he excelled which has

occasionally passed for sport when puzzled examiners were trying desperately to find reasons for nominating an intellectual student to a Rhodes Scholarship, the game of chess : Professor Mavor played it excellently as only a man with mathematical capacity can play it : many excellent people in Toronto will remember him best as a strong chess-player : of late years, I believe, when I suppose his standards were less exacting, he took up indulgently that much less intellectual pastime, which has become one of the more dubious hobbies of the age, and to which many able men and women now give their best mind (men and women not otherwise unintellectual, but of first-rate intelligence), auction bridge. But chess was his first and best love.

I recur to his many-sided friendships : you never knew where you would find them. A theological lecturer, in a rather severely denominational college, did not seem to me a likely friend for him : but he was a friend : chess had first brought them together but theology helped to keep them together. Professor Mavor's interest in the Doukhobors was in part theological : he remembered the good old days of Victoria of happy memory when theology was still a power and the blankness and dullness and unimaginative deadness of this age of atheological and irreligious negations had not damped and choked young life with its grey and cloudy dawn. He found me one Sunday evening reading hymns, I remember ; the best : Horatio Bonar's and Matheson's and Whittier's : he discoursed upon Horatio Bonar fluently and with edification. He knew the good side of Victorianism. He liked Horatio and appreciated him, not less than he appreciated his friend Horatio's son, James Bonar the economist, who represented better the newer age.

You met in his house old ladies and middle-aged ladies without rank or influence or wealth, who had been drawn to him by his kindness and to whom he had



been drawn by their unconventionality, by their sincerity, by their frank interest in speculations and ideas out of the common rut: they were "characters" in a word, and he craved for "characters": if he was intolerant and uncharitable ever, and he rarely was, it was towards conventional and spurious respectability, *κίβδηλος εὐσχημοσύνη*, and insincere and commonplace opportunism; and popular orators: to these latter he did less than justice: he seemed to see nothing in them but pious platitudes, perfunctory politenesses and noble nothings.

With congenial friends he, like Heraclitus of old, would "tire the sun with talking and send him down the sky": he was a night-blooming Cereus, and like Socrates and Aristophanes would sit on into the dawn of a new day before relinquishing the conversation he loved and the ever-new topics which he delighted to broach: "broach" is the appropriate word for these occasions.

I think it was Professor Caird, the master of Balliol, and an old friend of his in pre-Canadian days, with whom he used to take long walks in Glasgow, who said of him that his was one of the keenest minds he had ever met. I think that that was an accurate appreciation: it was also one of the happiest minds: because it was delivered, by that very keenness and breadth of curiosity, from the lassitude and listlessness which are apt to overcast the sky of the professional philosopher, who aiming at the solution of impossible mysteries and missing his aim, falls back so heavily to earth that he is half-stunned thenceforwards, and finds thereafter "nothing left remarkable beneath the visiting moon." Theology is a hard taskmaster; it is the only thing that gives a meaning to this unintelligible world: but in return and compensation if it be pushed to its logical conclusion it divests of value the petty trifles and pretty vanities of this poor hum-

drum life : but Professor Mavor never pushed this exacting science to its bitter ends : nevertheless it was, I suppose, on account of his interest in theology, that his friend Bernard Shaw named the clergyman in *Candida* the Revd. James Mavor Morrell.

And finally Professor Mavor was happy in his death, premature though it seems to us who knew him best : he escaped the haunting ghost, the spectre which darkens this world : the prospect of an old age helpless to the point of uselessness : and so forgetful of its former self that every one else wishes to forget the self which is still present : *he* never lived to become a holy show ; though men as able and as intellectual as he was, like Lord Sherbrooke, have sometimes survived to suffer that last stroke of Nature's ruthlessness.

He died technically in old age : in reality in his prime ; if his prime be measured by his mental keenness, by his vivacity, by his interest in life, by his unfailing kindness to all his friends, and by his loyal and lasting affection to his own family.

## IX THE RELIGIOUS INTERPRETATION OF LIFE AND ITS ATMOSPHERE

### I

**I** PROPOSE to read to-day some rambling notes on the religious interpretation of life and on the atmosphere in which that interpretation and those interpreters live.

I am moved to this theme by more than one motive : not only because, as I grow older, it clutches me more closely (for reasons into which I need not enter), but also because the present and passing age appears, at first sight at least, more and more to challenge that interpretation, to steer clear of that atmosphere, and to evade and elude those fog banks, deeming them sometimes to be full of fear and frost and icebergs, deeming them at other times to be deceitful mirages, and oases without substance.

Whatever precisely be meant by a religious interpretation of life, it is open to any sober onlooker to see that the present generation is in a rough and ready sense "irreligious" : not merely because it is out of touch with St. Paul and is not disposed to assemble in prayer, and feels more and more clearly that religious services are tedious boredom—that in itself is only a sign that the majority of the congregation have individual and distinct religions of their own, which "the common prayer" of the old and historic churches does not meet—and not merely because all magical and mystical rites, all sacerdotalism, all

“sacraments” in the popular which is the high-church sense of that word, appeal to a smaller and smaller fraction of an educated youthful audience ; but also because—apart from these somewhat external features of religion—the apparent essence itself—the existence of God and the goodness of God, the reality of the Day of Judgment, and of some kind of Heaven and Hell, all this, which is so much the essence of religion that it is by no means confined to the best and latest religion, Christianity, but commended itself in a certain large degree to Pagans like Plato and Socrates, all this seems to have a very weak hold to-day on the generation which is growing up, and to be in process of dissolution into picturesque poetry and out-of-date imaginations, in their eyes. Mr. Gardner, the author of *In Defence of Faith*, says outright “to-day we have children free-thinkers—children atheists and children students who have just read enough history to know that once upon a time there was a religion called Christianity.”

Of course this interpretation of present belief and unbelief is itself only one out of various interpretations of the Zeitgeist. I am told, and I have felt myself the truth of what I am told, that in spite of all the collapse of the religious house of cards, of the cards which represented the King and Queen of Heaven, and the Evil Knave, and the simple single Ace, who meant more than King or Queen or Knave, there is more Christianity in the world to-day than there ever was ; that the prophecy of Christ made some two thousand years ago—“I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me”—is more patently fulfilling itself than it has ever fulfilled itself in the age when theological dogmas were more positive and more firmly believed. I think it is true and equally true that all questions are open questions to-day, all horizons are disappearing and all anchors dragging, and yet that the essence of



Christianity was never more radiantly received and more heartily welcomed.

Then what can be this essence ? not apparently the existence of God or His goodness : certainly not the existence of the Adversary, or the Spirit of Evil (none seem to-day to be so poor and humble as to do *him* reverence, like the old Scotch woman, and to concede *him* power) : not even the existence of the soul and of the hereafter and of a day of judgment ; but simply and solely the goodness and majesty of love and self-sacrifice, the worship of Christ and of his cross : “ The solemn shadow of His cross is better than the sun,” and this too in a world which never before craved sunshine more than to-day and sought it more desperately, fleeing from the northern fogs and rains every winter regularly, to find an artificial and alien sunlight among foreigners ; which never worshipped pleasure more continuously, which never set itself to kill time more avowedly, which never so frankly turned its back on all goals and aims other than a good time while it is possible, a short life and a merry one.

It is bewildering, the contrast and conflict of incompatible ideals in which the world is living, each so keenly perceived and followed by those who have elected it : “ incompatible ” I wrote, but are they actually quite that ? Is not that word too bewildering and paradoxical : is there not some point at least where the ideals meet ? It seems likely that there is, and that they meet at least for a time, and mix, in the characteristic and typical virtue of this age. Kindness—benevolence—charity—pity : the worldiest of the worldly will hardly sin openly against these virtues ; will hardly suffer actual want to go before their eyes unrelieved. They will not forgo their unrelenting pursuit of pleasure, sunshine, and a good time, nor deny themselves these things for the relief

of want ; but they will relieve want when they cannot help seeing it : the sight hurts them : they are soft with the age : soft lives breed soft peoples. They admit at once that if *their* children were starving they would steal at once, impenitent and determined to get them bread ; they simply cannot bear the crying of a hungry child : they do not expect unemployed miners to bear the crying of a hungry child : there is here a point of contact between the secularists and the religious, even though the religious, so called, be only unbelieving Christians : Christians who do not believe in God or Devil or Heaven or Hell, in soul or second life, or Day of Judgment : only in Christ and pity and mercy.

They are like, the people of this generation, the tender-hearted young man of Matthew Arnold's poem " The Sick King in Bokhara " : the young king is very young and sensitive ; full of pity for the manifold sufferings he sees all round him : every case of sorrow appeals to him : he meets a rather extraordinary instance of life's tragedies : a man who has, in a moment of suffering and thirst, cursed his own mother, and then repentant has invoked upon himself the sentence of the law, death by stoning, and he has received joyfully this death by stoning which will deliver him from a worse fate in the world to come : but the king is unconsolable for the fate of this scrupulous and exacting sinner. The old vizier, who is his adviser and who has the callousness of age and experience of life, is amazed and disgusted by his susceptibility : the vizier runs rapidly through a list of local tragedies of the same sort, all familiar to the locality and to all localities, and the merest commonplace of human existence : and he sums up sentimentously and sternly, " Wilt thou have pity on all these ? no : nor on this dead dog, O king."

A man cannot live in this world, he knows : cannot

hope for a moment's happiness in a life "where but to think is to be full of sorrow," if he allows himself to think about it, and not to forget others in his own more fortunate estate. He spoils his own life without being able to relieve a thousandth part of the misfortunes of others: the young king is a type of the passion of pity which is the passion of a self-conscious age: and which binds and endears Christ and Christianity even to those Christians who reject the supernatural in spite of Christ's faith in it; and accept Christ for their master and guide, in spite of the supernaturalism of His creed and the records of His life.

Illogical, incredibly illogical, says some logician of a Platonic turn of mind: if they do not accept the assumptions and hypotheses and presuppositions, on which Christ lived His life, how and why accept Him? The ultimate reality, says Plato, is God and His goodness; doubt that and you cannot stop on the steep and slippery descent of unbelief and pull up at the great rock on the way down which you call Christ. Not in logic perhaps, but most people are not logical or Platonic: they are more human and more like Aristotle: and Aristotle always fought shy of God and Heaven and an immortal soul, but clung to virtue and conscience: these were *his* ultimate realities, the human instinct for τὸ καλόν, the noble and beautiful: and if Plato said, they were unmeaning and unreal without God, he was content merely to retort: "God and Heaven and immortality are dreams and speculations: these other things are real, though they may be inferences and deductions drawn from higher verities; the higher verities are too high for me: the deductions and inferences are so much lower: so far removed from their sources, so much nearer earth, that they reach me, and I can see them: they are *my* truths: they are more real and true for me and for most men

than their logical causes and their far-off divine origin." There is, therefore, I think, a point of contact between the faith and the unfaith of this generation, and it is in the universal recognition of a measure of practical Christianity, and in the universal respect, within limits, of its Founder. Could that Founder return to-day or if He is here to-day, I take it that He is adapting His words to our changed atmosphere and is saying, "Ye believe in Me : believe also in God."

But the atmosphere being changed, and logic and metaphysics counting for little and no dogma standing fast, the age is very slow to take seriously the pre-suppositions and the faith in God, in which our Redeemer Himself lived. They take Him for Himself and for themselves, but they cannot swallow dogmas and theories, not even His.

And this is a natural result of the growth of science and the universal break-up of conviction. Science has destroyed not merely religious dogmas but all dogmas : her own included. Man is rebelling not only against religious orthodoxy but against scientific orthodoxy : mark how medicine rails against her own shibboleths and prejudices, how Sir Wm. Osler deprecated and depreciated drugs and systems of medical thought : how Darwinism again loses ground, especially its grotesquer assumptions of a monkey origin for man : it is not merely that men have always cordially detested monkeys—that may be a testimony in favour of the monkey origin, the hatred being child of a fear that it is only too true, or the fear being father of the attempt to think that it is not true—but scientific evidence, so far as there is any, has always set up the wolf as a rival claimant for man's parentage, and the were-wolf stories are more ancient and more widely spread than any Darwinian speculations : lycanthropy, though it be more incredible, has left more witnesses to itself.



It is not inconsistent or incompatible with all this, since Nature abhors a vacuum and cannot live on doubts, that the age is also an age of Faith, only not of theological or religious faith, but of scientific faiths : no nonsense seems incredible to some people, and they are many and include many journalists and a few doctors, if it comes in the guise of medicine : whoever believed before, who will ever believe again, when this tyranny of medicine and of medical science is overpast, that doctors are going to dispense their remedies so successfully as to dispense with death ? I well recollect how some years ago Professor Loeb was understood to have announced—from Chicago naturally—that he saw his way to abolish death : “ Be merciful, gentlemen,” said Goldwin Smith, who at that time had not reached any cravings for prolonging his stay on earth, “ you are adding a new terror to life.” I wondered in my simplicity (I was much younger than I am now)—could there be anything in it : perhaps I curtailed a trifle the morning prayers of University College, on the morning that the *Globe* reported Professor Loeb : I certainly felt a certain doubt crossing my mind, would these prayers be desired much longer if Professor Loeb were successful. I wondered as I went down town that day at what seemed the unnatural calm, the callous indifference of Toronto, to the new star in the west : my insurance society was willing to refund my last premium, but very sceptical of my seriously wishing it refunded : until gradually it dawned upon my credulity that I was just another victim of the Zeitgeist ; just another victim of the yellow press, and just another victim of the craze of the age for miracles and signs and wonders under the head of medicine. And since then Professor Loeb, in spite of his expectations, has himself joined the majority, and though his successors, Messrs. Steinach and Haire and Co., are still treading in his

footsteps, this time with monkey glands for their credentials of immortality (so that the same poor creature which has been credited with man's parentage, is now credited with the capacity to bestow upon man a perpetuity of monkey life upon this planet, and the continuous society of a wilderness of apes), the number of men and women, I think, who are taken in are less. And when another man of science, and this time a politician, announced from Paris last spring that radiography and radiograms were responsible for our unusual rainfall, even the *Globe* was incredulous and appeared to concur in the verdict of Canadian science, "another lie from Paris." The age is full of credulity about science though not about theology, but the credulity wanes and the incredulity increases.

Assuming then that incredulity towards all dogmas and doctrines and systems, especially systems and doctrines theological and religious, but, towards *all* systems, is the note of this age on the negative side, while on the positive side its note is the acceptance of practical Christianity, of virtue in its ancient sense, that is, the sense recognized among Pagans and Christians, it is worth noting perhaps how manifest is the reincarnation of Periclean Athens, how emphatic the vindication now and here of one at least of the Greek uses in Pericles' day of the word virtue or ἀρετή or excellence.

The Greeks were the intellectuals of the world, and being so, could never confine themselves to a purely moral use of the word ἀρετή as kindness—charity—benevolence: they could never help stepping over in the next breath to the other meaning of ἀρετή with them: intellectual capacity, insight, knowledge, wisdom ("insight" and "wisdom" being the words which mediate best between the two uses, since we can all feel that though our virtues be very far indeed

from being commensurate with our knowledge, being in fact in many of us in closer touch with our ignorance, still there is a certain "wisdom" or "insight" in a good man, however ignorant and simple-minded, which it is absurd to call "knowledge" and which has no relation to education in the narrow sense, and yet is not to be defined as mere "feeling" and emotion, but proceeds from a certain deep stratum of peace and righteousness within him, wherein feeling and thought are alike consciously present : his thought is suffused with feeling : his feelings are not blind and dumb but are self-conscious thoughts).

I am trying to reconcile the two Greek uses of ἀρετή : but to return to Pericles, he continually uses it, as the present age—kindly worldlings and unbelieving Christians alike—use it, as synonymous with active benevolence : "in the plague of Athens," he says, "those shared the mortality of the time most conspicuously who had the best claim to be called virtuous men, good men" : obviously those who threw themselves most fearlessly and generously into relief work and who became nurses and visitors of the sick and dying : or again in a less striking passage, Pericles reaches the same point of view, "We are unlike most of the world in what we recognize as virtue : we make our friends" (not as in the East, he means, or among barbarians) by receiving favours and gifts and benefactions—by accepting backsheesh and *pourboires* in popular language—but "by bestowing kindnesses" : in short, Athenians feel that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

Our age is then reverting to Athenian standards, and though there is much more striking passion and more arresting phrases in St. Paul's epistles, "though I give my body to be burned and my goods to feed the poor and have not love, I am but a sounding horn and a clanging cymbal," yet the doctrine is the same

and the interpretation of life is the same, and the religious atmosphere is the same.

But this very sameness, by the way, contradicts much that one hears about the continuous change and never ceasing progress of the world : the world is ever moving—people say—though the churches may deny it (*e pur si muove*) : and the change of religious atmosphere in the present age is just an instance of this law of progress, they say : but how can that be ?

For after all it is not progress if Pericles can be trusted : it is just a return to Athenian humanity after many centuries less humane. As Gibbon is said to have looked back wearily across the intervening ages to the Rome of the Antonines to find a society with whose ideas he could sympathize, so a more modern Gibbon, less interested in Rome than in Greece, less a man of the world and more literary and intellectual, looks back longingly and fondly to Periclean Athens, for the model of the creed and of the system of thought which he sees now reappearing around him, but which he finds flowering best four centuries and more before Christ.

And besides, and this is much more significant, not only is our up-to-date interpretation of life and our present atmosphere no new thing, no sign of a real change and of a novel progress ; but after all it owes its efficacy and its extension not to Pericles, but to St. Paul and St. Paul's Master : the Gospel of kindness is the same, but the passion which has redeemed the world by means of it, its popularity, the masses of men and women reached by it and converted by it, are all Christian and not Periclean : there is no real difference between Periclean Athens and the best Christians of any age—apart from the trivialities of civilization, telephones and telegraphy, motor-cars and electric lights over your beds, in all of which there has been great change and vast progress



—except that the creed of humanity has never been preached or practised with patient passion on a world-wide field and by all classes, including the poor, and perhaps most of all by the poor, except by Christians.

It is only Christ who in a real and historical sense, and even apart from theological metaphysics, is in any case and at the lowest estimation, the Redeemer of the world. To return to Pericles is to return to the same creed of humanity and mercy and pity, minus its passionate patience. Where is the gain? Where is not the loss? Against the thousands of humane merciful and pitiful Christians of all ages, races and classes, a Pericles here and there, a few superior persons, a few philosophers and preachers, a Pythagoras and a Saint Socrates, and a large number of ordinary Athenians, of less intellect, and perhaps, on the whole, kinder hearts, for whom mercy however was not a regular system and a religion, but a natural inclination, spasmodic and fitful as human impulses are.

Perhaps indeed the intellectuals of ancient Greece hardly deserve to be ranked as high as the Athenian commonalty: the intellectuals were subject to the scientific scruples against mercy and to the callousness which still attends intellectualism: the callousness of the Grand Vizier of Bokhara. They could not help seeing the brutalities of life, infanticide, abortion, prostitution, slavery, massacre: and seeing these things, to put them down to the laws of Nature, and to assume, I suppose (with Calvin after them), that most of the souls born into the world were created to be vessels of wrath, vessels of dishonour, made by the Potter for reprobation; for mean uses here, and to be scrapped hereafter, if hereafter there were.

They could not but contract a scientific callousness, somewhat like the scientific callousness of continental

vivisectors to-day (who have not the national love of animals of an English doctor and vivisector, and will not always be bothered to put out of the world at once without further pain the unfortunate dogs, cats, rabbits, and rats and guinea-pigs which have served their purpose, and survived their usefulness, "and in whose guts there is no occasion for them to grabble further"). Even Aristotle shows this intellectual callousness: even, though in a less degree, Plato himself: even to some degree Saint Socrates: how could a philosopher study this awful world of Nature and not become callous?

And besides, the intellectuals of the ancient world were naturally subject also to the plague of scientific self-righteousness: they were the intellect of the world: the choice spirits, created to live the life of speculation and thought: the life divine, the life of thinking upon thought. The rest of mankind were the beasts that perish (not merely were *as* the beasts that perish): they felt, in the vigorous and irreverent rhetoric of Luther, that they were the elect, who had swallowed the Holy Ghost, feathers and all: their Calvinism, like the later Calvinism and like all religious systems, was a very aristocratic system, provoking at once the question, "Who then can be saved?" but differing from the later Calvinism and later Christianity in excepting from the general doom the men and women of intellect, instead of the men and women of Calvinistic faith, or—in the ages since Calvin and according to the religion of the present age—the men and women who are devoted and sincere Christians: with or without a belief in supernatural sanctions for their Christianity.

It appears to me, then, that present-day humanitarianism instead of registering progress towards a new doctrine is often only a return to the humanitarianism of ancient Athens, which itself fell far short of the

earliest and simplest form of Christianity. Our humanitarianism is merely Christianity under another name or often something smaller : a practice and a creed of mercy modified and weakened by intellectual callousness. "Pity," said the Stoic Seneca, "is the fault of narrow minds." He relegated it, as Mr. H. G. Wells, the prophet of the passing hour, relegates it, to the lower orders : would it not be wiser to account pity the redeeming virtue of weak souls and worldly souls ? All souls to-day except the intellectual elect are merciful. It is the one hold they still keep upon the faith of Christianity which most of them still profess. They do not conspicuously bear the cross of Christ, but they conspicuously shun cruelty : few people can be found to-day who are brutal and cruel to children, or even, in our nation, to animals : "He is merciful, full of pity, the young compassionate God" of the Christian religion, and He has not lost His hold, He has even increased His hold upon mankind, in this virtue of mercy and pity, if nowhere else.

I have been labouring at the thesis that the religious interpretation of life for many of the younger people of to-day—including a large number who are in their way devoted Christians, though without belief in the supernatural—is a religion of social service and good works and practical Christianity, and that the atmosphere, which breathes from it, is a certain passion of pity, mercy and tenderness for a sorely stricken world : some one objects (after Plato) that this religion without supernaturalism, without God or the Day of Judgment or a second life, is not religion at all ; that religion involves at least a minimum of supernaturalism : and the objection looks sound in logic, but man is not in any large degree a logical animal and we are concerned with facts here and not with logic. If religion be morality suffused with emotion, and if the devoted lives of these agnostic

Christians is full of emotion in a very real sense, i.e. of personal affection and even adoration of the Master who redeemed them and the rest of the world, more at any rate than any other Master has ever redeemed it, it *is* religion and it is in a religious atmosphere that it lives and moves. For what alternatives are there? And how interpret it except as a religion? Some people, like the former Editor of the Labour Gazette known as the *Daily Herald*, will prefer to call it "socialism," but that is only a matter of names: when he says that socialism is his religion he is only seeking in company with the spirit of the age to avoid theology and theological terminology, and choosing the weaker and milder and less theological word "socialism" for the stronger and more emotional word "religion," which has always hitherto suggested "theology," but, which in this scientific and agnostic age, has almost been detached from theology.

But can it be permanently detached? Can a passion of pity and mercy and tenderness for lost souls and a lost planet—a planet most appropriately named, for it is wandering in space without moorings—survive permanently and continue permanently to inspire men and women, without any supernatural and theological substructure and foundation? What alternatives are there to the old supernatural and theological foundations?

It is obvious at a glance that many of these neo-Christians, these agnostic Christians, who follow Christ but reject Christ's God and all Christ's supernaturalism, owe the beginnings of their fervour, their start as neo-Christians, to a Christian upbringing and education: their fervour is a "rudimentary" or atavistic survival of a much less negative creed; their devotion is the legacy from a full-blooded Christianity which being dead, nevertheless yet speaks in them: their



sentiment is inherited Christian dogma and Christian theories of life ; you trace in it as you trace often in children's faces—not what they are themselves, not what the child is itself, but what their parents were : you will have to wait a few generations before you can see what persistence of religious emotion and Christian passion is possible without the Christian dogmas, creeds and theories, which inspired originally that passion and emotion in the Founder and in His earlier and more believing followers.

If people are to live without supernaturalism, what are the alternatives to it ? what theory of life and what conduct of life and character remain, if supernaturalism be really and not only in appearance and imagination rejected ? It appears to me that the logical result and issue, for a being like man who has some logic in him and some instinct for adapting his theories of life and his conduct in it (i.e. his character) to his ultimate beliefs, will be very different from this negative and neo-Christian agnosticism ; at least if a few generations of such agnosticism shall have followed each other and if the remnants of supernaturalism shall have been forgotten.

Is it not likely, is it not inevitable, that there will be a recrudescence of infidelity in the true sense of the word, of unfaithfulness to a man's deeper instincts and aspirations ? If Christianity come to be regarded as "a noble lie," as one of those glorious dreams which Plato, perhaps ironically, called "lies" because he could not begin to demonstrate their reality, and yet "noble lies" because without them good lives are impossible even to the mass of individual men and women, and doubly impossible to the continuance and persistence of a healthy and happy state, and a healthy and happy system of Government, what basis remains for life and conduct ?

Already there are ominous mutterings of the

coming of a creed very different from any form of Christianity, neo-Christianity or historical Christianity. I hear and read of people who say frankly, that if they are honest it is simply because honesty is the best policy: they cannot believe in mythology and supernaturalism, in dreams about a soul and a hereafter and a God, still less a good God (how can a good God have created a world so full of horrors as the present?). They must fall back on common sense and intelligent self-interest and adapt their lives to their interests, and if honesty still recommend itself to them, as being along the lines of intelligent self-seeking, they will be honest still after a fashion as some of the sophists of Greece were honest. Honesty is an intelligent and shrewd compromise between the rash and stupid self-seeking which leads a man to prison or the gallows (*Voilà l'homme qui a mal calculé*, said Fontenelle when he saw a criminal going gallows-wards) and the equally rash and blind sentimentality which leads a man first of all to nourish fancies of heaven and hell, and a hereafter and a soul and a God, and ultimately, not seldom, to the same goal of gallows or prison. Two types of men were crucified by Pilate and always have been and will be by the governors of the state: the numerous men who were too bad for their age and society, and the rare and solitary and lonely figure who was too good.

If that very dubious screed or creed, "honesty is the best policy," really became general, the future is not likely to be pleasant or edifying even to the small degree to which the past—under Christianity—has been edifying and pleasant: "apparent dirae facies": the Greek Sophists understood the argument: it did not make for righteousness with them, only for a judicious cynicism: it did not make for happiness, only for a very general and very profound pessimism: it meant

in the words of one of the choruses of the *Œdipus Coloneus* :

He who desires the larger share,  
Shunning desires-in-reason,  
Cleaves unto foolishness, I swear,  
Nor thinks in season.

For length of days lays up a store  
Nearer to grief than pleasure :  
His joys he sees not any more  
When he has lapsed from measure.

One helper rings the curtain down :  
No wedding-bells attending :  
No harp, no song, no dancing throng  
When Death comes for the ending.

Not to be born is first and best :  
Soonest to die is second :  
When youth is past and heedless jest,  
All sorrows can be reckoned.

Jealousy, feud, contention, strife,  
And last, abhorred and helpless  
Old age : that frowns on joy and life,  
Friendless and self-less.

Wherein lie I : and *Œdipus* :  
Like wintry-shores wave-broken :  
The winds of sorrow beat on us :  
Calamity's our token.

This creed that honesty is a judicious compromise and "the best policy" means, to put it in the words of a modern humorist, who turned to humour to escape pessimism, I presume, that every man of forty is a pessimist or a fool : it means that childhood and youth—though they may be described by the aged philosopher as vanity—are the only treasures which life has to offer : when they are gone it is time to ring down the curtain or at least to shut up and stop talking and writing : the rest is or ought to be silence : you can say nothing to cheer the world : let the young

man enjoy his youth and the wife of his youth, he will find out soon enough that these illusions pass.

I have often wondered, quite fruitlessly, whether this is what the great Lord Shaftesbury, the philosopher not the Christian, meant when he said that his was the religion of all sensible men, and what that was no sensible man ever told : did he mean that at his time of life there was no religion left to tell, but that it was mad to say so ? It may be so : it is a plausible interpretation of the often-quoted oracle : but it is possible, and we should all prefer, to take it in the opposite sense : it is at least possible that he meant “ no decent man wears his heart on his sleeve or talks about his religion : he is satisfied if he can contrive at a pinch to put a little of it into his daily life and walk : and to make his daily service a little less unprofitable ” : or, in more modern and up-to-date language, “ I do not propose,” I imagine the noble Lord saying, “ to contribute articles on ‘ my religion ’ to the evening papers, at five cents a word, or even at five dollars : I prefer not to make money out of it but to be out of money by it : I do not expect to serve God for naught, but for loss, if need be, in His service, of money and reputation.”

Let us suppose he rather meant this and so contrive to unite him with the later and less philosophic Lord Shaftesbury.

I have been surmising that the glow and ardour of the youthful neo-Christians and negative Christians of our day is too largely a legacy of their Christian upbringing to last permanently, if Christian education and upbringing disappear in the future : that their creed may even pass into the degenerate and desperate creed of honesty as the best policy, after which there is only a step needed to land us individually in the grossest materialism and the blankest secularism and pessimism, and to land our world in chaos and crime.



But no one will deny the honesty and devotion of these believing unbelievers or withhold his admiration, sympathy and respect from them : they have accepted the spirit of the age, inquiry and suspense of judgment, what the Greek philosophers called *ἐποχή* : they have fought shy of supernaturalism, its assumption of God and soul and a hereafter, and a day of judgment : they have with better reason, with abundant reason I think, fought shy of that very “hard saying” and difficult doctrine, of the Omnipotence of God : you cannot, said John Stuart Mill, seeing what the world is, and all its horrors, accept at once the goodness AND the Omnipotence of God : if the Creator of this world be omnipotent He is not good : if He is good He is not omnipotent : take your choice. These youthful Christians have taken their choice and rejected His omnipotence : they have seen too much of life to hesitate in their choice : too much to attribute all the evil of life to man’s deliberate wrong-doing and mismanagement : they know their Omar Khayyám too well :

Oh, Thou, who didst with Pitfall and with Gin  
Beset the Road I was to wander in,  
Thou wilt not with Predestination round  
Enmesh me, and impute my Fall to Sin ?

Oh, Thou, who Man of baser Earth didst make,  
And who with Eden didst devise the Snake ;  
For all the Sin wherewith the Face of Man  
Is blacken’d, Man’s Forgiveness give—and take !

So far well enough : but can their creed live long without a larger dash of supernaturalism than they, or some of them, are willing to infuse into it ? Sometimes they talk of helping God : that seems to me much better and a more promising creed : they need not deny their instincts and contradict all the better aspirations of human nature because they reject the

doctrine of God's omnipotence : that doctrine presumably was a desperate venture recommended to their ancestors by the spectacle of the world's evil ; the same spectacle which recommended to Calvin his doctrine of the vessels of wrath and dishonour, and the brands suitable for burning, a few only of which could be plucked therefrom.

The spectacle of the world, I mean, was so awful, that churchmen caught at the suggestion that the evil was only temporary and permitted for unknown, but sufficient, reasons ; that it could all be removed at a moment's notice by an Omnipotent and Good God, as soon as the right moment came. Plato, who has so largely influenced the churches' doctrine, and in some cases, as in the case of the inherent immortality of the soul, has led that doctrine so far beyond anything that can be demonstrated as the teaching of the Bible, might with advantage have been consulted here.

Plato did not assume omnipotence : he assumed only dualism : a much more natural creed than monism : though some Christian thinkers call themselves monists like Mr. Middleton Murry : he assumed the existence and the goodness of God, but also the existence and evil of matter : good is struggling with evil in the world, according to Plato. Nature is always trying to make good, as Aristotle prefers to put it, but always falling short : her aims and objects are one thing, her results another and a poorer thing : theories (this is Plato again) are necessarily much truer than facts, because facts are material and conditioned by the imperfections or evil of matter : the planets move in ellipses theoretically : practically the ellipses are imperfect, because everything material, including even the heavens and the sun and stars, are imperfect : there are spots on them. Modern science smiles at some of the illustrations with which Plato illustrates his theory : modern science remarks quite

soundly that Plato would never have discovered Neptune, even with much better instruments than he had : for even if his instruments had shown him the perturbations of the satellites of Uranus as Adams and Leverrier discovered them by their instruments and jumped accordingly to the presumption of a Neptune, at a distance in space too great for the telescopes of those days to bridge, Plato would only have shrugged his shoulders in resignation, and discovered another instance of the mischievous irregularities and tiresome independence and freakishness of matter, and satellites ; of evil, that is ; of the Devil in later terminology.

But because Plato overrated the free will and casual interference of matter with the will of God, that is no sufficient reason for rejecting Dualism and the Devil or Matter—by whatever name the principle which resists law and God be called. “There is nothing”—said Disraeli (by the way)—“to be alleged against the personality of the Devil which cannot also be alleged against the personality of God.”

The facts of life, I apprehend, suggest Dualism and the Devil : and the facts of life, therefore, in themselves suggest that God needs the help of all that is best in man, in His fight and man’s fight against all that is evil in Nature and in man : He not only helps those who help themselves—a doctrine which can be pushed of course into the extreme of atheism—but needs the help of those who help themselves. He worketh hitherto and Christ works in a “creation travailing and groaning in pain,” and needs also other workers. I think the neo-Christians go beyond the evidence and contradict the deepest instincts of mankind, when they reject supernaturalism root and branch because they will not be blind to facts and will not assume a Divine Omnipotence for which they find no warrant in fact. They might better try Mani-

chæism, a heresy which horrified Cardinal Newman but which is a part of a fairly conservative theology, I think, to-day.

Plato and Socrates, who were not apologists for Christianity, trusted human instinct enough to assume the existence of God and His goodness : they did not include these assumptions in "the noble lies" which Plato thought necessary for the good state, and which he therefore added to the creed of his ideal state : "noble lies" he ironically called them, because he could not begin to prove them to be literally true : such as the inherent inequalities of human nature, the essential difference of the good man from the bad, of the energetic from the slack, of the intelligent from the unintelligent : even the poetic doctrine that marriages—true marriages—lawful and natural marriages are made in Heaven—which, after all, one can still believe without believing in Plato's method for assisting Heaven to choose—or in the very narrow duration and very short term which he allowed to these heavenly marriages—Plato and Socrates again, Plato especially, built upon the human instinct which asserts a hereafter and a Day of Judgment, and a Heaven and a Purgatory—and even in extreme cases, for the sake of the weaker brethren who need "awful examples" before their eyes, an everlasting Hell—Socrates was too Greek and scientific to be as confident as Plato, but he counted the idea to be a suggestion of conscience and a "happy thought" of religion, and certainly not, as the Bolsheviks count it, a wicked dole and an unscrupulous dope and a cunning dose and drug, administered by the rich and fat and well-to-do, to the poor, to entrap them into resignation with their poverty, and to paralyse their arms and hearts, lest they rise up in their might and wrath and slay the deceivers and the treacherous churches, and take their goods. This is a



very modern and very Bolshevik explanation of that instinct for religion and the supernatural, which made even the cautious Socrates say that this was his raft across the stormy sea of life. He would not forsake it, he said, for illegitimate life-lines and escapes to illegitimate shores, in order to lengthen his earthly life. He was, he said, anyhow, and to however little theology he committed himself, a believer in God as none of his accusers were; more deeply, i.e. more passionately a believer: whereas if he tried to humbug the jury or bribe the gaoler or otherwise cheat the laws of Athens, he would be thereby, *ipso facto* and by his own actions, convicting himself, even though he said not a word, of the very charge which his enemies brought against him, the charge of atheism. An atheist is a man who sins against light, who violates his conscience, nothing more and nothing less: if he does this he is an atheist though he murmur or shout "Lord, Lord" all the time. If he shilly-shallies and dodges his conscience, with the rest of us, he is, as the old nurse said, with her woman's intuition into the spirit of this age, "a moderate atheist." Socrates is very Christian at times, at most times: not for nothing called Saint Socrates.

Well, to return, could not our youthful Christians, our faithful agnostics, have gone as far as Plato and Socrates in trusting human instinct for a soul and a hereafter and a good God and a day of judgment, even though there is no proof of these assumptions of instinct.

Why, Plato was almost ready to trust this instinct against suicide: far more ready to trust it than most people of the present age trust it: to them it has become a conspicuous instance of the rashness of basing human law on theological dogmas: why should the law, they ask, still try to punish would-be suicides? God, if there be a God, gave man his reason and judg-

ment and responsibility for his actions, and God, if there be a God, helps those who help themselves : why limit by law man's natural liberty to dispose of himself, as many of the Eastern, and also of the Roman stoics, though the latter were divided on this question, disposed of themselves, when their health failed or their cause failed, or a beloved friend died ? as the Japanese of to-day often dispose of themselves when their emperor dies. Aristotle was not quite as honest as Plato : he was more human ; he resorts to a pious fraud. Plato says the argument against suicide, "that God set me here and did not mean me to be a quitter," is a hard saying, difficult to appraise : Aristotle is content with the pious fraud that suicide is cowardice : which quite obviously it is not : not necessarily that is : it may be so here and there : it must be so sometimes : at other times it is courage.

But when Socrates and Plato and Aristotle could build, even though with hesitation or clumsily, on instinct in these matters, could not our young heroes and heroines of neo-Christianity have built a little more confidently on instinct ?

Why, it seems to me that there is one consideration at least which helps a man to build very confidently on instinct.

Why is there no demonstration of Christianity ? Why is it an assumption only, or an instinct ? For the best of reasons, it is fair to answer, because only so is it a real religion : if it were demonstrable positively or even plausibly, like gravity, or even like evolution only, it would cease to be a religion : it would become mere common sense and the best policy and a gilt-edged investment ; at the worst a very promising speculation : worth while for all who valued themselves and were intelligently selfish, and possessed of the power to calculate their own interests and investments : it would appeal irresistibly to all who are bent

on making the best of both worlds : but it would not be a religion. Religion too is a speculation, but not a speculation of self-interest ; it rests on the desperate determination of Socrates to make his belief in God his raft through the storm of life : and never to dishonour God and conscience : hereafter or no hereafter : it is a desperate venture of faith, and speculation of hope, and gamble of love : the love of God and good : not any gilt-edged investment in a comfortable Heaven, "solid joys and lasting pleasures" as the quaint old-fashioned hymn has imagined it, but courage or faith, the words being synonymous ; courage and faith to obey the best and deepest of instincts, the instincts of conscience to do the right thing, though it be often for the time the most difficult thing : though it may lead and sometimes has led, in the instance which we all remember daily, only to failure and the cross.

Every type of cautious and calculating good-timer would jump at a demonstrable and demonstrated Heaven : but would they demonstrate Christianity or in any way work the works of God and Christ ? "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," He said. The good-timers are not easily attracted by this text : "solid joys and lasting pleasures" is a text much more to their taste and to every one's human taste ; but it has not the same Christian authority : it lies deservedly under a cloud with the Christians of this age—both believing and unbelieving Christians.

## II

I have been questioning the wisdom of neo-Christians in so radically rejecting supernaturalism, and have been suggesting that instinct lies at the foundation of all religion and involves many supernatural items which they reject, because they reject, or are so much inclined to reject, all supernaturalism : and,

further, I have suggested that in the very nature of things, in the nature of man and of religion itself, there was bound to be a great question-mark, a lifelong "If," an impossibility of demonstration, at the very outset of the search for a God and a soul and a hereafter: at the very basis of religion. To some persons, as to Sir Robert Anderson, this is a stumbling-block and a rock of offence: they talk of "the silence of God" as merely due to the revelation of Christ already given: upon that speech of God, they suppose, follows silence naturally, further speech being unnecessary: but is not the silence necessary for another reason in order to make religion a reality? quite apart from the revelation of Christ. He Himself had to face it: He had to follow just instinct and conscience in His darker hours (and even He had darker hours), in spite of that silence and in face of that silence—"Eli—Eli—lamár sabachtháni"—where would have been His religion without the silence and the darker hours?

Religion, said Lecky, is the one romance of the poor: why not the one permanent and abiding romance of every soul, rich or poor, male or female, Jew or Gentile, Elamite or dweller in Mesopotamia: of old alike as well as young?

I say old as well as young, because I am at a loss to gauge the relative incidence of the religious instinct on old and young respectively. Plato, in the vivid opening of his most vivid dialogue, the *Republic*, dwells upon its incidence on the old: he makes the old man Cephalus moralize in a very Pagan or Phari-saic fashion upon the virtues and blessings of wealth: how hardly shall the poor man enter the Kingdom of Heaven! his poverty has so tempted and soiled and smirched him: he has had to steal perhaps to feed his children: he has been driven at any rate into sharp practices and sordid compromises between



his conscience and his interest, and into dishonest business, and now when he is old the legends of hell and purgatory and the day of judgment, ridiculed as old wives' tales in the heyday of youth, return, especially in the dead unhappy night, and when the rain is on the roof (I am embroidering a little for Tennyson's and Sophocles' sake, to give *them* a little added dignity), return and torment his soul, lest they be true : his conscience cannot reject Hell as a priest's or a statesman's dope, as a dodge to help the police and facilitate the protection of property, as such fears have often been interpreted since. But old Cephalus, having enjoyed a competence, has no such haunting memories and no such misgivings. He is more like those typical and curious heroes of Paganism (Greek or Roman or Chinese) who have found nothing better to say on their death-beds, than that they have nothing to wish undone, nothing to hide, nothing to ask pardon for. Not a doubt has crossed the placid mirror of their peaceful and protected lives, not a misgiving, that, after all, in spite of their peace and harmlessness, they have been unprofitable servants : but other men are frightened at the approach of death, and other men begin to worry about Hell.

This is the incidence of the religious instinct, in Plato's picture, upon the old : a natural and conscientious incidence but modified by a mechanical and external and purely artificial theory of virtue, for those old men who have led cloistered and comfortable lives, and have perhaps imagined themselves to be as wise as serpents and as harmless as doves : who have been at least the most reputable of Pharisees. But is not the incidence of the religious instinct much stronger and more direct upon the young ? Is not a young man's romance of religion a more familiar spectacle than the same romance in the mind of age ? Religion is one of the many voices of youth, of many-

voiced youth—*πολύφωνος Ἡβη*—blending with honour and patriotism and love and marriage and all the other voices of romance.

Nature always has her compensations, of course, and youth has its cynicism too and its brutality, its blasting temptations and its horrid slavery to the beast within, whom the Greek poet as he grew older was so thankful to escape: but old age, though it has escaped the tyranny of the beast, has often—especially in an unromantic and commercial and unbelieving age—outlived not only the beast but the angel also, who had shared with the beast the throne of the young man's heart, possessing perhaps, alternately like Box and Cox, a common lodging-house, the angel by day, the beast by night, by night when the wolf and tiger are awake not only in Nature's jungle, but in the jungle of the youthful heart; the old man, I mean, in an age like ours, has often outlived himself and outlived romance: and is only conscious of dull grey days and apathetic end.

If he is told that there is no Hell or Purgatory, no soul nor resurrection, all gone with the bogies of the nursery and the superstitions of his nurse and grandmother, he may be more relieved than otherwise to lose this romance, for he has become just a bored valetudinarian and a disillusioned Sadducee. I am at a loss to gauge accurately the incidence of these romances, I repeat: for so at a loss was also Clough, who has given them their best expression:

There is no God, the wicked saith,  
And truly it's a blessing:  
For what he might have done with us  
It's better only guessing.

There is no God, or if there is  
The tradesman thinks 'twere funny  
If he should take it ill in me  
To make a little money.

There is no God, the youngster feels,  
Or even if there may be,  
He surely never meant a man  
Always to be a baby.

Whether there be, the rich man says,  
“ It matters very little,  
For I and mine, thank somebody,  
Are not in want of victual.”

Some others also, to themselves  
Who scarce so much as doubt it,  
Think there is none, when they are well,  
And do not think about it ;

But country folk who live beneath  
The shadow of the steeple,  
The parson and the parson's wife,  
And mostly married people,

Youths green and happy in first love,  
So thankful for illusion :  
And men caught out in what the world  
Calls guilt, in first confusion  
[like Sir Francis Bacon].

And nearly every one when death,  
Disease or sorrows strike him,  
Inclines to think there is a God,  
Or something very like him.

I don't think the subjective or temperamental side of the religious instinct can be better described, and it leaves the incidence of the instinct on youth and age balanced and wavering. But whatever be the incidence, how prodigious the loss to the world when this romance is temporarily banished : temporarily I said ; you cannot fortunately destroy youth or even youthful age, with materialism and commerce and Darwinism and scientific doubt : you only obscure for a season its romancing gifts, and its romancing spirit, and its instinct for religion.

Matthew Arnold has objected that “ being weary is

no proof that there is where to rest": "we build ourselves, I know not what, of second life I know not where."

But the question is how an instinct for the supernatural, for God and the soul and the hereafter and a day of judgment, arose and continued and subsists still, even in an uncongenial and desiccated atmosphere, unless there be a cause and a sufficient reason; evolution does not explain it, only increases the difficulty: if the instinct underlay the thoughts of simple and illiterate men, whence came it? if it be a good and useful instinct, it ought to be of late growth and to be growing: as a matter of fact, it is of early growth and withers during the proud progress of civilization: "the why and the whither and the whence" are the questions of childhood and the childhood of the race; they have lost for the time their impact upon a civilized age: but what then? So much the worse for the age: religion was not a dodge and a dope and a dose of priests and statesmen, though they find it useful: but much of the misery of civilization comes to us because the religious instinct has passed under a cloud: is now in penumbra: is suffering from the shadow of this earth, which is arresting our light.

Why all this lamentation to-day over gambling and betting and drinking? Why two millions of dollars wasted on a prize fight, and large sums over football games? Because drinking and betting and gambling have become doubly necessary, in the absence of religion and romance, to render life tolerable for the victims of materialism and commerce: trebly necessary, when education has increased self-consciousness and rendered the appalling dullness of industrialism patent and visible and tangible to its congested and overcrowded millions. Why was the Great War and then the General Strike in England,



for all their dangers, so exhilarating and even so welcome? Because they were really something new, some serious excitement, better than the stale football matches of professional players, and the horse-races of horses never seen before or during or after the race by most of those who gambled on the race; horses which might just as well have been asses or kangaroos or pigs ridden by apes: "severed from the pure embraces of his children and his spouse, he must ride fantastic races mounted on reluctant sows."

For the mechanic, the bank clerk, the shop hand, the factory girl, what is there in life beyond youth and alcohol and gambling, if there be no one and nothing to feed romance to them and in them, no one to dream with them of the whence and whither in a romantic fashion, and to some real and romantic purpose. Science, especially medicine, has superseded religion for many of them, and manfully to fill the gap, it tries to promise panaceas for everything, including old age and mortality: but the panaceas do not pan out: and even if they did, what advantage in a perpetuity of factory life or even of football matches and baseball leagues? A hundred years ago it was law, not medicine, which dominated religion and turned it into legal jargon, with its talk about "transactions" and "forfeits" and "payments" and "sanctions" and "fines and foreclosures" and the like legal phrases; to-day it is medicine (not law) which has trespassed into the romantic land of faith and hope and love: but it is no more able than law, not as able as law, to replace the romance it has superseded.

People don't go to church now more than once a Sunday, if once: they go motoring, risking their lives and the lives of others in the mad pursuit of speed and excitement: and if they go once, they are

apt to hear only the commercial and economic topics of the day discussed : only wages, only the things that are real and raw. Ah, but if anyone could really command both science and the religious instinct, and history, if any man had two lobes to his brain, one conversant with science and the other full of the religious instinct, and could tell them not only of the probable beginnings and occasions of life (that is so small a thing, and may be even a monkey), but of the probable meaning and purpose and end of life, which is everything, and of the passion of religion, and of the history of passionate religions, and of the thoughts of the passionate men and women who started or popularized these religions, would they not listen then, think you ? and be better satisfied with their drab weekdays, for a real feast of reason and a flow of soul on Sundays. A negative scientific age has no imagination, as Darwin had none, and its scientific and instructed thought fights shy of insoluble problems, and yet these are the only problems which naturally interest everybody, as a thousand quaint illustrations are always showing.

Professor Bateson, the biologist and Mendelian, came to Toronto some years ago to lecture on Mendelism : but the Yellow Press saw its chance and announced that he was going to destroy Darwin and reinstate the Book of Genesis : and Convocation Hall could not contain the crowds who naturally and instinctively craved the end of Darwinism, and not unnaturally, in view of their education, the rehabilitation of Genesis. Some of the men had lost control of their wives, no doubt, and thought that with the rehabilitation of Genesis they would once more rule over them. The Professor never mentioned the subject, never meant to : but the patient people came and came again in hope and went away unfilled : filled only with details about primulas and their Hibernian variations between

orange and green, which were as so much east wind to their poor uninstructed minds.

Their instinct was sound enough. They knew without reading John Morley, what John Morley said, that the mercury in the moral thermometer of man's heart had fallen as many degrees by reason of Darwin, as by reason of Bismarck : and as it now turns out, much more permanently : for Bismarck is not only dead but damned : I mean his life-work laid in the dust ; whereas Darwinism crumbles slowly, if it crumbles. It still has life enough left in it, I mean, to trouble people who have never read Aristotle, with the mischievous heresy that origins count and are significant, and that a monkey ancestry discredits man.

Origins are nothing, said Aristotle flatly, ends are everything : everything human, the best things included, marriage and the family and the state and civilization had the meanest origins but the noblest issues : they came into existence for the vulgarest of purposes, to enable man to live, but they have all been found upon trial to serve quite other purposes, to enable man to live nobly ; they have all been, as we should say, schoolmasters to Christianity : that is Nature's way, added Aristotle ; she trieked man, she enticed man into these institutions through his stomach and his animal nature : she fed the brute : but she knew what she was about, for all her imperfections and her fallings short, she was building better than *he* at least knew : she was christening him, so to speak, for a higher and better life.

All this is the A B C of Aristoteleanism : but this ignorant age does not read Aristotle and has never been edified by the cheering hope and faith which underlies his scientific callousness : even a scientific mind cannot work without faith, he remarks (*πιστεύειν δεῖ τὸν μαθηόντα*).

To continue Aristotle's complaints to the Darwinians : " You gentlemen believe in evolution," I imagine him saying to us : " I believe in a sort of evolution myself, but evolution means a goal as well as a start, and the goal is everything, if you want to know the nature of the thing evolving ; and the start is nothing : and yet you never mention the goal ; you talk only of the humble origin and seem to have no imagination, no theories even, of the goal : if man be really a monkey in origin, how account for the angel that shows itself in him by fits and starts, by angelic actions and heroisms from the beginning : the angelic actions show that he was never really a monkey : the first and implicit reality of human nature was the human soul, which preceded all action, and of which monkey actions were only his first essays, and his occasion, not his cause : don't trouble yourselves with occasions, find the cause, that is to say the goal. As one of your own politicians has said, ' The question is, is man an ape or an angel : I am on the side of the angels ' : and so am I and so even are you yourselves : if you are really evolutionists, it is only the angel that matters and that concerns you, only the angel that explains man : get down to business and show man how to hasten the coming of the angel : man is obviously both ape and angel alternately, at present : show him how to evolve."

But science does not do it : it frankly is ignorant of the why and whither : and confines itself only to origins and to present facts, and is silent about final causes and purposes : it is no substitute, does not begin to be a substitute for religion and theology : it must either find a substitute for theology and religion, or turn again to them ; for nothing else satisfies human instinct and human reason. Instinct and reason want to know the why and the whither : have always wanted



to know : have never been the instincts and reason of monkey souls : whatever man's body may have started from. If evolution is only a physical evolution from a monkey's body, it may be all true enough, but it is of no importance : it is the evolution of soul and instinct and reason that interests every one. Find out this evolution and you can fill your lecture-room as once the churches were filled with eager listeners : give it up as hopeless and your lecture-room will be as empty and emptier than the churches are now : they at least have hope and faith and love to appeal to, even though at present they are short on knowledge and science : and have lost their other and more intellectual "foundations."

And one may add that in another way the neo-Christians have despaired too quickly about the supernatural, and have trusted too little in human instinct and human reason, as themselves supernatural : is there not plenty of the supernatural left in the world, everywhere ? is it not supernatural, if, even to-day in the chaos and wreck of religious faith and of theology at the present moment, people can still be found, humble and perhaps illiterate men and women, with no book well known to them but the New Testament, who contrive to worry through this world and stick it out and stick to each other if they are husbands and wives, and to their children, if they are fathers and mothers, unshaken by the craze for divorce, unshaken by the break-up of the family, bearing patiently with each other, considerate of each other, through better and worse, through riches and poverty, through sickness and health, and bearing patiently with their children, after youth and youthful love and youth's illusions have passed by, turning their marriage, which was no casual lust of the eye and prompting of the silly flesh, and of our brother the ass, as St. Francis puts it, but was directed and steered

by principle and prayer ("I could not love thee, dear, so much, loved I not honour more") into the sacrament which the churches define marriage to be, the inward and spiritual grace, which has blossomed out of the outward and visible sign and ring and service with which the churches consecrated their marriage; turning their wayward children into Christians of a sort, possessed of something of the inward and spiritual grace, into which the outward and visible sign of baptism has flowered; and owing everything to their home influence. If there are such Christian men and honourable women not a few, still to be found, especially among the unsophisticated and uneducated and simple-minded, is it not all a miracle? is it not all supernatural?

Nature contributes plenty of virtue, especially to the young, but what supplies consistent and persistent virtue to the old and way-worn except supernatural grace? It was never known to those of old time, to the accomplished Pagans of Greece and Rome, that old age could be sustained cheerfully, except for the few intellectuals for whom intellectual passion kept the world interesting and entertaining and amusing: and even they required, besides intellect, a material competence and good health. But without good health or a competence or a keen intellect some poor souls have "toughed it out" ever since Christ redeemed the world, patient and uncomplaining, in the strength of that Christianity which has satisfied their instincts and maintained the springs of faith and hope and love against the droughts of age and experience. There was Miss Catherine Marsh, e.g.—of whom Mr. Gardner speaks in that book of his which might much better be called "The Varieties of Religious Experience" than William James' book of that name: when Mr. Gardner saw her on her sofa in her old age, "Make Jesus your best friend,"

she said. "I look back over a long life and Jesus is the reality of it; all else seems chimerical": that Cathcrine, you see, joined hands with Catherine of Siena over the long gulf of unlike ages and different churches: each escaped chimeras, as no other sort of man or woman succeeds in escaping them.

Cannot the young and exacting neo-Christians so severely set against supernaturalism, find the supernatural here and take heed to it? Can Christianity really be a "noble lie"? Is not that brilliant phrase an ironical phrase for the truth which is too high for timid minds and faltering hearts? Can it really be true, as pessimists have supposed, that the last stage in disillusionment is the first stage in degeneracy? that all the achievements of virtue in the past have rested on illusions, and on a Christianity which was born of illusions and founded by a young saint compact of illusions? Is a God so ironical as to build His greatest creatures and creations upon illusion conceivable?

Our neo-Christians cannot stand the doctrine of the Virgin birth: but New Testament scholars have answered that the doctrine was not an immediate and reckless dream of a credulous miracle-loving age, but was of late and of slow growth: the result of Christ's life and influence, not one of the causes of His influence and life.

The more His followers meditated on His life and influence, I suppose, the more they were driven to the thought that His birth, not less than His life, was a miracle; until they rebelled, as many men and thousands of women have rebelled ever since, against the thought of His animal origin: a natural rebellion, a rebellion of human instinct. The theory may not establish His Virgin birth: but at least it separates His birth as far as the poles are asunder from the countless dirty stories, so dear to the sensual Greeks,

of the loves of gods for mortal women. *They* made *their* gods in their own image: the simple and devout early Christians refused to make their God in their own image, and after the fashion in which they themselves, with all their sins, were made: they demanded a better birth for Him because they had found in Him so much better a nature and so much more Divine a life. It was a very natural thought and instinct: and an inevitable inference: to which many women and some men, knowing nothing of theology, are brought of themselves and independently still to-day: it is a subjective faith.

Or are the other explanations of this world offered by the pessimists conceivable? Mr. Hardy, who was one of the most gifted as well as one of the most popular thinkers of the age, has suggested that this world was the work of the prentice hand of the Creator; He created it, found early that it was radically disappointing and a dud and a misfit, as His creatures too have found it since, but forgot to scrap it, as the continental vivisectioners, to whom reference has already been made, forget to scrap their rats and rabbits, when they are tired of them and can learn no more from them: so the poor afflicted victim of experiment has lived on since, resenting his creation, and alienated from his forgetful and callous Creator, to whom he owes nothing good except Pandora's gift of hope.

It is a very poetic fancy, like Æschylus' fancy of a callous Zeus and a saint or superman, Prometheus, who gave men the gift of hope. Mr. Hardy is understood to have taken Æschylus for his model. And Christ, I suppose, takes the place of Prometheus and redeems man, by the gift of hope, "*τυφλὰς ἐν ἡμῖν ἐλπίδας κατώκισε*"; but Æschylus never finished his story for us; and is supposed to have added a finale (which has been lost) wherein Prometheus and Zeus and Prometheus' clients were reconciled: the story



for Æschylus did not end where it ends for us : but Mr. Hardy has left out the all-important finale : he is not fair to Æschylus or to us. He has only shown "the whole creation travailing and groaning in pain" : he has not shown the triumph of our Prometheus and the redemption and reconciliation of man and God by Him.

Very poetical, too, is Mr. Bertrand Russell's rhetoric and fancy. "That man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving, that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms, that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave ; that all the labours of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast depths of the solar system, and that the whole temple of man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins—all these things if not quite beyond dispute are yet so nearly certain that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand. Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only upon the firm foundations of an unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built."

A passage as conspicuous for eloquence and imagination as for its defiance of human instinct and reason, and its one slip from lucidity : what is meant by the oracular ambiguity of "an unyielding despair" ? Why should not despair yield, except that instinct bids it hope on ? and how explain that instinct ? However that be, Mr. Russell destroys the power-house instinct whence has proceeded all the hope and courage, and generosity and mercy, and a large part even of the energy and mere industry, which have pushed the race onward. Where else shall they go

for these qualities, those millions who are otherwise only petty cog-wheels in a poor machinery for producing inferior products, for producing a pair of boots, a pair of shoe-laces, a plough, an ironclad, a bar of music, at best a clever book like Mr. Russell's ?

Socrates, who was a sculptor but an absentee from his workshop, denounced the trades and even the professions because they made man a slave in body and in soul to other men, or at best to mechanical and technical skill : the artisan lost his health as well as his liberty over a forge or in a factory : the musician sacrificed his soul to the execution of a difficult piece of music, or to the amusement of an audience : each ceased to be free and an amateur : and the free amateur was ashamed to become either mechanic or professional : he did not want to be either a slave or a professional artist.

The world of to-day cannot stop for Socrates' tirades and Socrates' scruples, but they remain none the less literally true : and only supernaturalism can bind up the broken hearts and blank lives which issue out of the hideous industrialism which covers nine men out of ten : all except the handful of intellectuals like Mr. Russell who enjoy writing hectic books to pull the legs of the vulgar, and make their flesh creep : *pour épater le bourgeois* : and the other negligible handful of sybarites or captains of industry who can get along for a time without supernaturalism—so long as health lasts, and money pours in, and “they and theirs, thank somebody, are not in want of victual.”

I have been talking at great length about the religious interpretation of life : some one may object that that interpretation has disappeared or is disappearing because it was so childish and indolent : amiable clerics—they will object—lived in that interpretation but did little to recommend it : at the best

they were cloistered saints, like Trollope's Mr. Harding: we have all known many Mr. Hardings, who conducted services and consoled old bedesmen and bedridden invalids, but who lacked vitality and energy, and lacked still more knowledge of the world in which they lived, and of the mass of men and women among whom they moved, and of the elemental passions, and sordid disgusts, in which such life passed away, not only in the slums of horrid modern cities, but as much and still more in the outwardly picturesque country villages of England or in the wilds of Ontario; those villages and wilds which within—and to one who knows them from within—are largely dead men's sepulchres, full of all uncleanness, where every prospect pleases and only man is vile.

The blameless Ethiopian—I mean Mr. Harding—passes a quiet life, dated only by the daily celebration of matins and evensong, and vexed only by the weekly preparation of a sermon, which, if he is wise, he begins on Monday, but if he has not the pen of a ready writer, he defers and defers, until Saturday is a day of torment for himself and his wife and for the children: who are too numerous perhaps because their father has thought that the Lord will provide, and who disturb the sermon as Casaubon's classical studies were disturbed by the “domesticæ turbæ” of the poor scholar's poor home: this is not a very elevated or elevating plane on which to live, says the modern irreligious critic; it is too slack and languid: too negative: its religion recalls the indolent piety of Sophocles' rural policeman in the *Antigone*: but the critic being irreligious and not a church member sees nothing of the poor, cheered and amused, of the domestic bickerings of many poor husbands and wives healed and reconciled (one of the chief functions of the modern church to-day), of the incurable invalids sustained and heartened.

The critic being no reader of Plato, overlooks also Plato's defence for negative and passive righteousness: the good man, the just man, observes Plato, passes for indolent and inactive because his energy is spent in controlling himself, in mastering himself, in taming himself and his children: the unjust man, the aggressive villain, the *arriviste*, the promoter, the profiteer, gets a great deal of undeserved credit for energy and vitality, because he expends all his vitality and energy in exploiting his neighbours, in sweating the poor, in plundering the public: he advertises his virtue or talent of energy: while the poor clergyman buries his in the napkin of his private life. The profiteer seems, therefore, to be more alive than the cleric: he *is* more alive, externally: because he has no inner life. His honesty is only the best policy, and therefore—as is usual with other successful advertisers, of pills and other less harmless impostures—his honesty is a very inconstant and fitful quantity: sufficient at the best to keep him out of prison: not sufficient to keep him in good standing in the Christian church: what sort of a Christian *can* the best policy make?

There is hardly an hour of the twenty-four hours of a day when the question of honesty does not present itself to every man, woman and child among us: and if he or she or it is to think of the best policy every time, there will not be enough honesty to go round: there is not enough already to go round to-day, even when honesty is still regarded as a matter of principle and religion by most people, and not as a best policy.

The nation, it is true, is lost in the long run which does not practise honesty, but the individual man has not a long run, a very short one at best: and it is too much to expect him to sacrifice his own interests, which do not always make for honesty, for the State's



sake, unless honesty with all the other virtues rest on the instincts which tell him of God and the soul and a hereafter and a day of judgment. Even Voltaire came to the conclusion that if there be no God in fact, it is necessary to legislate Him at once into existence by Act of Parliament. Any flapper could have told him as much ; could have told him of the deadliness of atheism and the necessity of a belief in God, without giving a second thought to the matter : she knows it, even this poor Audrey, by instinct. I have heard a dancing schoolgirl let fall this philosophy, as an obvious truism, as casually as a remark upon the weather, in the intervals of dancing.

The somewhat negative quality, then, of the average Christian's virtue, even of the virtue of the priests and preachers of Christianity—though it invite the jests of men of more conspicuously active professions—has not really shrunk into Pharisaic ceremonialism to the degree to which the secularists are inclined to suppose : ecclesiastical morality, like politicians' morality, or stockbrokers' morality or academic morality, has its own special limitations, which advertise its negative and mechanical side : but would any of these different practitioners claim to represent real Christianity ? They know how short they fall of it, even though they have not the humility of St. Paul, who began by calling himself the least of the apostles and not worthy to be called an apostle, and went on when he had become a better Christian to describe himself as the least of all Church members or saints, and ended up when he had become a saint by styling himself the chief of sinners.

I find it a difficult and even impossible question to answer, how far the religious interpretation of life interferes with a keen interest in life, in art, in business, in politics, in history, in science, in everything in fact which seems to stand outside religion and

theology. Obviously it does interfere in the case of lackadaisical lack-lustre temperaments which are oppressed by the difficulties of living and making a living, and turn to the shelter of religion, as a child to its mother's apron-strings. Just as men and women do well in academic life, because they lack initiative and will-power, because they are over-susceptible and elastic, and can steep themselves, more easily than more vigorous natures, in books and theories and other men's thoughts, and therefore forge ahead of more vigorous men, in our quaint literary examinations, and carry off most of our scholarships, fellowships and professorships; so, I think, the churches attract sensitive and timid souls and are filled with timid and sensitive souls in undue proportion; but in spite of that, it is scarcely conceivable that the vigorous and masterful souls, which love the life of the world and live that life, do not live it better on the whole and love it to better purpose, if their vigour and masterfulness are anchored on faith, hope and charity, on faith in God and hope for the world and love for the human kind. *Μηδὲν ἄγαν*, said the wisdom of Greece: nothing too much: there is a time and a limit for everything: a limit therefore to the religious instinct and to the religious interpretation of life and to the atmosphere of that instinct and interpretation; (but a limit equally to the spirit of commerce).

In accordance with that idea Barrès in one of his three political books, perhaps it was in *Les deracinés*, but I forget, makes some one argue that it does not do to press religion or patriotism very far: it is against common sense and will only discredit both. Well, of course we have all seen patriotism discredited in recent years, not repudiated merely by the good Christian Edith Cavell, but discredited by all: especially through the rampant nationalism which

President Wilson contrived to stir up in Europe, with his policy of self-determination; but whether it is possible to discredit a sober and serious religion by over-emphasis is a different thing. It is difficult for Protestants to admit as much: what is Christianity itself but a happy mean between the pessimism and despair and alienation from life of the Buddhists and the Eastern religions, AND, on the other hand, the mere vulgar materialism and cheap worldliness of the West: and what is Protestantism but a happy mean between the Catholicism which shuts the best spirits into cloisters and nunneries, often where they cannot even count upon teaching the young, where they cannot even aspire always to bring forth those children after the spirit, who disappoint their spiritual parents so much less than the children after the flesh disappoint *their* parents (who deserve to be disappointed, for they are more and more at the present moment not true parents at all but mere sires and dams); is not Protestantism itself a happy mean between Catholicism and the mere materialism and commercialism of this age and continent?

An Irish cynic, writing of an Irish politician sent to Westminster as M.P., says "he went from a land still worshipping the mystical doctrines which the rest of the world had discarded like foul linen, to one whose thoughts and ideals were never above material things: on one side the Protestant heaven furnished with the newest inventions which enable men to eat, drink and rule: on the other, a religion of death professed by a people wallowing in Christian darkness, enslaved by an ignorant priesthood with minds as dark as their uniforms: the majority of the Irish people recognize that the chief purpose of man on earth is the salvation of his immortal soul: wherefore fasting, prayer, humility, poverty, charity, kindness and a contempt for the pomps of the world are

enjoined on the faithful. But the pomps to be scorned must be known, so this politician, now His Excellency, lives in the Vice-Regal Lodge in order that his soul may be properly humbled by the consciousness that thousands are unfed in the streets of Dublin."

Protestantism claims to be the happy mean between the religiosity of Roman Catholic countries, which supports monks and nuns, and celebrates endless fasts and masses and prayers for the dead, and meets political turmoil and tumult by novenas in honour of the Virgin, and builds enormous stone churches for parishes occupied by poor habitant farmers, and fills them with daily services, AND on the other hand, the mere secularism of this commercial age. Protestantism claims to make its people energetic, active, business-like, not to take them out of the world, but only to shield them from its evil: to encourage them to work with all their might at whatever honest work of the world their hands find to do: to make them keen farmers, mechanics, traders. Can there be too much of this worldly and practical religion? Is a Protestant country necessarily less Christian than a country of Catholics? The Catholic certainly knows more of sacred history even in childhood: I have, as it happens, two grandchildren, a little Roman Catholic girl aged seven, and a little Protestant grandson aged two and a half. Said the little Catholic, showing her crucifix to her small cousin—"Dennis, who is this?" "Man," shouted the little Protestant, unconsciously trenching even in his infancy on Protestant heresies. "Yes, but who?" The infant hesitated and reflected, "Santa Claus," he said brightly; it was the extent of his mythology. But what serious significance is there in these trifles? Who can answer himself when he asks himself these questions? Is active citizenship, trading, farming, mechanical ingenuity, science, art and literature incompatible with the Christian



religion, in the Protestant form? Are the two principles of modern citizenship and religion necessarily divorced?

Certainly they often seem to be. I remember being once at Brindisi, and spending the morning in a Roman Catholic church, full of believers, and spending the afternoon in the harbour, watching the new and scientific Italian ironclads.

The two activities belonged to the same people: but did they belong to the same spirit? Was there ANY science, thought and reason in the worship and the worshippers of the church? Was there any religion in the engineers and mechanics who manned the fleet? or was there an absolute divorce between the Roman Catholic form of Christianity and the modern scientific spirit of the fleet?

Nor need one go to Brindisi, to see the conflict and the contrast there presented: I have seen it in Oxford itself. Oxford was founded by Churchmen and for the Church: its dons and lecturers were, a few years before my time, still clerical Fellows: celibates all of them, as long as they were Fellows and Tutors: then, when they lost interest in teaching classics, they would take a country living and preach classical sermons above the heads of their rustic congregations, and give place in their college halls to younger men who had not exhausted yet the interest which Plato and Aristotle can give to life and teaching. It was not a bad system, as Goldwin Smith used to say, in his conservative mood, for securing at once keen and active teachers, wholly devoted to their college and their students, and also a never-failing source of new blood and new youthfulness in the college hall and common room, when the former teachers were growing tired and stale, when desire for Plato failed, and the grasshopper—the chirruping of Aristotle—became a burden: or, in the revised version, when the caper-

berries of Aristotle, the piquancy and the pungency of his ethics, burst. There was more to be said for the mediæval system, suggested Goldwin Smith, who was always pleased to relieve the tedium of his liberalism and his annexationism with reactionary reflections, than the modern spirit was willing to recognize. The modern spirit has replaced mediæval Oxford with married dons who stay on for life (or during good behaviour, which in a modern university means the same thing), but who cannot be relied upon, being human, to retain their enthusiasm for teaching and for their pupils and their college to the bitter end, and who have no college livings now to which to retire. How can *they* retain their enthusiasms undiluted? they have to think of their wives and children, of butchers' bills and house-rent and taxes, of the launching of their sons and daughters upon life. Their other sons and daughters, their students, the children of their spirit and not their flesh, are likely to suffer by the incoming of modernity and normalcy, by the disappearance of mediævalism and celibacy and clerical fellowships.

And this was only a small part of the incompatibilities of modern Oxford: the younger non-clerical dons were classical scholars and philosophers only: they talked of Heraclitus and Greek philosophy, of Pagan religions and Mithras worship. Ephesus interested them for Heraclitus' sake, or even for Diana's sake: not only, perhaps not at all, for the sake of St. Paul and the beasts with whom he fought there. Classical scholarship and philosophy were at feud with the earlier-established interest of the Christian religion. I and my likes, as classical students, were interested in the new young laymen, who lectured on philosophy and history to us: but presumably we felt, I know I felt, a divided allegiance, and a conflict of two atmospheres: we could not but recognize that ancient

Oxford, that the founders of Oxford and of its colleges were represented better by Canon Liddon and Canon Bright and Canon King, all devoted Anglican dignitaries, and Christian preachers and hymnologists, than by the younger laymen, who took more stock in Plato and Aristotle, than in Christian sermons and hymns.

The antithesis was in Oxford as well as in Brindisi : science and classical scholarship and Greek philosophy were one thing ; Christian scholarship and Christian philosophy was another : and the two were hard to fuse : and are hard to fuse and will remain hard to fuse : and yet the two seem each necessary to the atmosphere of a great University. Anyhow, the common world of working men and women, of poor hard-driven men and women, of "almost every one when death, disease and sorrows strike him," needs Christianity, and cannot be satisfied and consoled amidst the mysteries and miseries and difficulties of daily life, by the high-flown speculations of young classical dons and classical students. A sober man, who wants to see life as a whole, must concern himself with each atmosphere and find some means of reconciling the two atmospheres and the two interpretations of life.

Arthur Hugh Clough the typical poet not only of nineteenth-century Oxford but of the Victorian Age and of nineteenth-century England, spent his whole life nearly and his poetic gift in worrying over this dilemma : his spiritual father, Dr. Arnold, did the same : Dr. Arnold tried to apply his Christianity and his classics together to politics : he argued that citizenship and creed should go together, that non-Christians should not be recognized as citizens, as Greece and Rome excluded unbelievers from *their* citizenship : he tried to distinguish between non-Christian and Christian Unitarians—there are plenty of each kind—to exclude the one and admit the other.

His other son, his son after the flesh—Clough's friend and peer—Matthew Arnold, felt the same double impulse, though leaning further and further away from Christianity and towards rationalism: Jowett, the Master of Balliol, his master and Clough's, felt the same: if he was not depressed by the difficulty of reconciling the two impulses it was because he was also a very ambitious and worldly man, and gratified ambition and vanity reconciled him, with Matthew Arnold, to a life of conflicting impulses: his friend and colleague Thomas Hill Green, less vain and ambitious and more of a thinker, was never equally reconciled: and his sermons became greyer and greyer: his successor Edward Caird, also a philosopher, was very deeply depressed by the insoluble problem, and in his old age could not maintain Jowett's cheerfulness and high spirits. Their common friend and kindred spirit, Lewis Nettleship, lived in a perpetual contradiction and indecision, and was never sure of anything: his pupils used to say that he was the original of Langham, the irresolute lover of Mrs. Ward's book *Robert Elsmere*: but then every Oxford man of other colleges had his own original for *Robert Elsmere's* Langham, and each said that he was a Fellow of *his* college: and so he was perhaps: Langham was a Fellow of every college of the then Oxford. Mark Pattison was a member of the same group and of the same spirit, and being more of a student than Jowett, derived less happiness and more melancholy than Jowett from his intellectual success and prestige: he began as a follower of Anglican Oxford and of John Henry Newman: but his intellect and scholarship divorced him from Newman before he had gone far in his company: but all of these eight men of Victorian Oxford illustrate this collision between supernaturalism and scholarship, between the two interpretations of life and the two atmospheres.



Critics of these waverers, these men hesitating between two worlds and two interpretations of life, are often unjust to them: even James Martineau allowed himself to scoff mildly at the men, who chose the Church's part though without much assurance or conviction, knowing that, the choice once made, conviction would follow: Clough also in his morbid scrupulousness wrote the typical line:

“Action will furnish belief: yes, but will the belief be a true one?”

Why should it not be true? Always provided that the action which furnishes it has been prompted in the actor by what seemed to him the deeper instinct of the two warring instincts: the religious versus the scientific? It was on this ground that one eminent thinker of the age, but I forget who, but after all half-a-dozen names could be suggested, told young men who felt a moral call to the ministry and to the salvation of souls without a similar intellectual assent, to follow the moral call and ignore the intellectual scruples (never obey a scruple, said Jowett boldly—he meant a mere scruple of the intellect), and this eminent thinker was himself following Aristotle: you will find yourself, said Aristotle, besieged by opposite instincts: obey the deeper, though you cannot be sure of its truth: obey it and obey it: and the habit of obedience will silence doubt and your intellectual eyes will become “set” to the interpretation you have followed, and your doubts will disappear with experience of life, and your faith will grow: and you will see that it is true by the end of life: “he that doeth my will—feeling in his heart, that he ought to do it—shall know of the doctrine.” If he does not follow the instinct, continues Aristotle, he will lose his eye for the right and true: he will become colour-blind in morals: evil will become his

good and good his evil. "Evil is only ignorance," objected Socrates and Plato; "and will pass with thought and education: sin is ignorance only." "Not a bit of it," retorted Aristotle, "say rather ignorance is sin: it is willing the right, not knowing it, that will establish the right at last: and ignorance of the right is only a sign, in the mature at least, that they have not followed right instincts and formed right habits." Every cricketer knows that you cannot play cricket well till your eyes are "set" to the bowling of the adversaries: in the same way precisely, you cannot "play cricket" well with life till you have "set" your eye to the right or better instincts, to the right or better habit: only so can you face the bowling of the adversary and the gibes and scoffs with which the adversary tries to bowl down the wickets of Job: and of other righteous followers of Job.

People understand cricket to-day and talk and write of it in season and out of season: but they do not seem to see its moral applications any more than they see that gambling, so abused and misused over horses and football matches and "bridge," is yet a type—a degenerate type—of the highest life: religion itself being a gamble: *corruptio optimi pessima*. "What will you do," said the recruiting officer, "to beat the Germans?" "I will bet my bloody life upon it," answered the coarse-mouthed but righteous Tommy: Tommy was a gentleman (and almost persuaded to be a Christian) as no Greek, even cultivated Greek generals, ever contrived to be gentlemen: *they* voted for themselves when there were prizes going: Tommy forgot himself and his poor life to "play cricket." And how well poor Tommy played it you all know: or if you don't, read it again in Mr. Montague's *Rough Justice*, the best book written to celebrate poor Tommy.

“ Have you ever heard of a British firm rejecting business because it was not Christian business ? ” asked an anxious inquirer of a British business man. “ Well, I have never heard of business being rejected, precisely in those words, but I have known business rejected because it was not ‘ cricket ’,” was the answer. Well, where is the difference ? The Englishman, like Lord Shaftesbury, does not talk of his religion : he talks of “ cricket ” instead : he is shamefaced and shy about talking religion : he speaks with *μείωσις* and *λυδότης* like an intellectual Greek though not for the same reason or for intellectual reasons, or from intellectual scruples : from moral scruples instead : he does not like to cheapen the best thoughts and instincts by chattering about them : he talks sports instead and cricket : and calls himself a “ sport ” : but the instinct is the same, and good cricket has its own religion and is a part of Christianity : it wants, I mean, to play fair : and to be honest : and honesty is of the very essence of Christianity : real honesty of course, not “ the best policy ” honesty : it is no doubt as well the instinct of statesmanship and of world-power, and of the British and the Roman character ; but also it is the instinct of religion and of Christianity : and herein is a sign and token that active vigorous citizenship and manhood are not after all divorced from the religious interpretation of life, though much religion be still, and has always been, unpractical and feminine and cloistered and afraid of life and of the interests and activities of this world.

But after all it is the unbelievers more than the believers who in an age of money like the present are afraid of life and of its responsibilities and dare not risk them. It was for unbelievers, not for believers, that Bordeaux wrote his moving tale “ *La peur de vivre.* ” It is easy to discredit the supernatural : it

all depends upon how it is presented. Euripides the Athenian poet and philosopher was a rationalist and yet always apt to introduce a god upon wheels, a *deus ex machina*, a visible figure on a high platform, at the least an audible voice from behind a screen, to resolve the knots and insoluble impasses of his dramas : and Sophocles occasionally, as in the Trachiniæ and the Œdipus Coloneus, did the same : and the reader is offended, especially with Euripides. What business has this rationalist with these popular and superstitious devices, to bring about a happy ending ? What indeed ? But it is the *tangible* god and the *audible* voice to which the reader objects. God is not tangible and visible, nor is His voice audible to gross human ears : but that is no sufficient reason, as Bernard Shaw says, for rejecting the still small voice that speaks to ears elect : for rejecting Joan of Arc's voices at Domrémy and the other voices heard by saints and simple Christians and by their Master. When Gibbon was inspired to write the history of Rome in the church of Ara Coeli, I think, in Rome, he writes in his prosaic unimaginative way " it occurred to me that I would write her history " : education had sophisticated him and filled his ears with the wax of modernism and Paganism : but as some one has said—if he had written in the style of Amos and the Hebrew prophets, and had said " the Lord came to me and said: Edward Gibbon, write her history "—would it not have been as true and much more exhilarating for himself and his readers ?—Clough and the Arnolds and Green and Caird and Jowett and Nettlehip and Pattison were not exhilarating to their readers, nor exhilarated in themselves, except by health and gratified ambition sometimes ; the tradition of the still small voice *is* exhilarating : it is against instinct and against happiness and against virtue and against the testimony of Saint Socrates and



Saint Joan and against the betterment of the world, to water it down to "it occurred to me": whence did it occur? from what deeper subconscious sources? from what deep stratum of conscience?

"Mind not the stars" [wrote Clough after Plato in his "Uranus"]  
 "Mind thou thy soul and God."

The peace which passeth understanding obviously is not less peace, but more, because it passes understanding.

### III

I have been talking a great deal about instincts and interpretations and about atmospheres: because in these lie the issue of right living: and every one, even the most cautious agnostic and secularist, sees the need of right living. John Stuart Mill and his friend George Grote the historian tried desperately to sever character from religion: like the Greeks they wanted an intelligible reason for everything, not mystical explanations and words like duty and conscience and the soul and God and religion, and a day of judgment and a second life. But intelligible reasons fade away into self-interest, though Mill, to escape this dangerous and quaking quicksand as his foundation-stones, boldly contradicted logic and wrote clotted nonsense. "The happiness of each," he says in his *Utilitarianism*, "is an object to each: therefore the happiness of all is an object to all." Which is mere sophistry: what he requires to show is that the interest and happiness of all is an object to each man: and he has not advanced an inch towards that goal; he has only repeated himself and fallen into the silly logical fallacy, to which Aristotle objected when he came across it, in Plato's socialism. "In my Callipolis, in my ideal state," said Plato (broadly), "where there is no foolish individual marriage and individual families

and individual parent and child but all things are in common, all men say of the same births and deaths 'my son is born—my father is dead,' and this is a mighty bond of union." "Quite otherwise," says Aristotle—"all men may so speak, but *each* man does not say so": "my son" in Callipolis is only "our" son: "mine" has been emptied of all sense and inspiration and force, when it is only a Platonic euphemism for "our": better be a cousin in the only country, if you want to realize the kinship of blood, than a son or father in this watery fashion and in this inhuman state: what is every one's business is no one's business; no one cares for a father whom he shares with every one, for the wife of a temporary marriage, for the children who are just as much and just as little the children of some hundreds of his neighbours. You cannot base duty and natural affection and the ties of kinship on communism: you cannot evolve energy and exertion and unselfishness out of communism: you only relapse to a deeper and more individual and more narrowly personal selfishness: to utility and utilitarianism, meaning "my" interest: and to honesty, if at all, as the best policy: and you cannot build duty on "my interest" and on "the best policy." I am summarizing, of course, not translating Aristotle. I often wonder which would be the larger stumbling-block to a communistic society: the unwillingness of the abler, more industrious and more energetic men to work for the same results and wages as the less able, the less industrious and the less energetic, a consummation which not only contradicts the parable of the ten, five and one talents, but puts a terrible strain on human generosity and unselfishness. (I have heard famous professors of Economics assert that *they* would sit on a fence and smoke and watch the others work: I doubt it very much, but I doubt also if they would do their best as they do now.) I often

wonder, I say, whether this would be the greater obstacle to communism, OR the unwillingness of the worse men, the work-shy, to work at all, if they could share equally in the fruits of the labours of the workers : anyway, the system seems to conflict with the elementary differences between right and wrong, between labour and laziness, between intelligence and stupidity : in fact, to contradict both moral law and human nature.

But to return from this digression about utilitarianism and socialism and communism, to interpretations and atmospheres. Mill and Grote attempted to banish religion as an interpretation of life and its atmosphere, and to introduce utilitarianism in its place ; and only relapsed into a system of the best policy, and the atmosphere of a self-seeking, more nakedly selfish and individual, than the present so-called " individualism " which has yet been compatible with much unselfishness : because it is a natural and instinctive system based on two opposite but natural instincts, selfishness and unselfishness : which meet and fuse naturally and wholesomely in the individual family. Plato tried to banish individualism and selfishness, for socialism and communism : and in Aristotle's judgment, only with the same lamentable results : except that Plato was never so mad as to war against the religious instinct : he only warred against individual selfishness : and thought he would obliterate it by juggling with words and coining new senses for the word " mine " and keeping the word in use after it had ceased to mean " mine " : as though the word itself was a safeguard and a passport to safety apart from its meaning. But I can imagine the honest secularists like Mill and Grote objecting to the religious interpretation and atmosphere, for another reason : not only to escape mysticism and miracles and mirages of God and Heaven and a hereafter, etc., but

because these ideas sometimes prove too much : if a man be religious—they will say—he not only finds at first a motive for life, enhances the meaning and the value of life and is so far satisfied and happy and at peace with his reason, but he will go on very shortly to undo all that he has achieved : he will go on shortly and because he has found religion and made his soul, in a sort of Irish sense, to empty life of meaning, to take away its value, and to become utterly indifferent to it, as indifferent as the early Christians who asked to be martyred, that they might the sooner escape from this vale of tears : or, to choose a modern instance, as at the Anglican funeral service we ask God shortly to accomplish the number of the elect and to hasten His coming : though most of us would be acutely distressed if God listened to the clergyman's prayer : to live for religion and in order to make one's soul—to quote the Irish cynic whom I quoted before—is to live for a religion of death, not for a religion of life : it is to court death and to live for death, not to live for life and for making the best of life.

It is true, I think, that religion, as we understand it, is at once the only thing that gives a meaning and value to this unsatisfactory world, and helps many sufferers to bear it more or less patiently and philosophically, especially those who have lost the prime advantage of health ; and yet for many persons it empties this life and world of reason and motive and value. It was most natural for the early Christians, who believed in the early return to earth of their Master, to disparage civilization and art and commerce and invention and philosophy and history and science : they were things very small by the side of the presence of Christ and of the Christian spirits of faith, hope and charity : it is still natural for the mass of later Christians, though they have learned by experience that the present world is not a nine-days'-wonder, but a



very enduring puzzle and riddle, to feel that they cannot rave about the glories of their worldly business, that they cannot count the moments impatiently before they can return to selling shoes, or keeping bank accounts, or laying bricks and mortar, or listening to a sick and querulous child (the merciful Anglican Litany, said the poor German governess, has a special prayer for those poor women who labour with children), or bearing with a difficult wife or employer or servant—it is still natural to be lukewarm about the businesses which most men follow. The blessing of work is a positive real and present and active blessing chiefly for students and professors and for that happy minority who have lit upon the one trade or profession which delights them and in which they shine : their heart is in it and therefore their treasure also : the rest of mankind, the large majority, over 90 per cent., have no such positive happiness in work and count impatiently the days still intervening before the holidays : and for the mass of *them*, their holidays are so few : and even then for the poor among them and the average worker, the choice is so limited : in England only a choice of over-peopled watering-places and cheap lodgings : only a prospect of sitting on the beach and watching the children build sand-castles : happy castles enough—castles in Spain for the children, but very sandy for their parents—if some of these thousands of poor hard-driven parents are Laodicean and lukewarm about their businesses, and are often made more so by seeking solace in their churches, so much the worse for the businesses of course and for the prosperity of the country, and so much deeper the grievance of the captains of industry and the hustlers against the churches. But even so it is only fair to set off against the languor and disheartenment, which romance and religion may have encouraged in some, the energy and industry which

the same religion has inspired in others : it will still be a question impossible to decide and admitting of no confident and general answer, whether religion has put more meaning and purpose and energy into the life of the world, into the art and science and history and philosophy and research and mechanical ingenuity which the world needs, than it has taken away from these activities and side-tracked into an unworldly quietism and an unpractical pursuit of the mysticism of the inner life : and of the emotions which recluses and the clergy cultivate in their "retreats."

This country and continent and this age is dazzled for the present by railway magnates and banking magnates and engineering and mining magnates and scientific magnates : but wisdom is justified of *all* her children still, and not only of her practical magnates and her scientists and scientific research : and besides, scientific research is not confined to science in the narrow sense of the word "science," though an ignorant popular terminology confines the word at present to the new sciences of chemistry and physics and biology and medicine and economics and engineering : every one who thinks for himself is a researcher, though what he discovers for himself be as old as the hills and has been discovered before him by his ancestors in every generation.

Theology, complained Macaulay, in his best superficial manner, is not a progressive science : it *is* progressive, so long as each man achieves progression for himself by his own independent thinking and heart-searching. No catchword is more abused than "original thought" and "new knowledge" : all thought is "original" and all knowledge "new," which a man finds for himself by his own independent examination of his own nature and human nature : apart from this, "original research" is only a silly catchword and a piece of superstitious clap-

trap : fathered by the arrogance and ignorance and tyranny of the new sciences : the only knowledge in politics which is essential, said an Anglo-Indian Governor, is knowledge of human nature, but this age of science has substituted for it the crazy doctrinaire pursuit of abstract terms "democracy" and "self-determination" and the like, whence the tragedies of recent India.

The interpretation of life, and the atmosphere of the interpreter, is what counts most for the world's welfare. It is hard to be patient when one listens to the controversy about "religion in the schools" : as if religion could be taught, or virtue : it can be caught, like any other atmosphere that is catching : but not taught : it can be caught from example and atmosphere and home : and therefore from those teachers, and schools also, where such examples and atmosphere prevail, but not directly taught like Latin and mathematics : it cannot be learned like French and Greek, it can be earned, like the virtues, by patient effort and continuous exercise of the will.

And therefore its natural source is not the over-driven schoolmaster who teaches sciences, but the home : and it is only imposed impudently upon the school to-day because the home has tried to escape from its responsibilities : the father has consented to become the man who dines in the house on Sundays : the mother, the bridge fiend who gives her afternoons and evenings to the game which has absorbed almost more of the talent and interest of clever men and women, than science and art and thought and history and economics ; and much more of their talent and interest than discredited and fading politics and out-of-date religion. (How have the mighty fallen and politicians faded ! I have the impression that in a recent election the chief interest in politics for the mass of quiet decent people was reduced to an active

sympathy and affection for the Governor-General, more than for either party or party leader.) But even in the modern home without family-prayers and family-religion and grace before meat, etc., a wise instinct pulls us up in the presence of our children : the judge in the "Dummer" township case descanted on the horrors of a home where the children had never heard a prayer or imagined a God : instinct intervenes in most homes, and recognizing that meals are a great part of a young child's life, rescues the grace before it from total oblivion and restores it to the children : better late than never, this recognition of religion in the home : but it will have to go much further, before the ground lost of late years can be regained and the lost atmosphere and interpretation of life can be recovered.

Atmosphere means so much : the difference of atmosphere in a world redeemed by Christ—however loose His hold upon its mind and conscience may seem to be to-day AND in the pagan world of civilized Greece and Rome, in spite of the humanitarianism of Periclean Athens, is worth a little reflection : it is nowhere clearer than in those matters of universal incidence, which affect all men, for example Love and Death : and the ideals of "a gentleman."

The Christian world of course cannot universally idealize so-called Love : it is impossible to do so in the face of experience : love and marriage are the natural fount and source of endless jests and cynicisms : and of endless tragedies : the problem of the "in-laws," for example, is only met by supernatural patience and consideration on both sides. Of all the marriages that every one talks or thinks about, a large proportion are felt to be misfits and more or less tragical : a still larger proportion are properly discounted as mere accidents of casual "juxtaposition" (I borrow again from Clough) : "juxtaposition it is"—he said of love—"and what is juxtaposition?" an ocean voyage



where there is nothing to do but flirt and philander means marriage: the propinquity of two decent-living young people, man and woman, in a place where they have few neighbours of their own sort means marriage: though there be no real natural congeniality and no marriage of souls: no sign of the marriage having been "arranged" in Heaven: nor arranged by natural instinct and natural utility, as a true union of opposites, and the best provision possible for the production of well-balanced and many-sided children (which was Plato's and even Schopenhauer's conception of consecrated and natural marriage), nor in fact "arranged" at all; not even as marriages are often "arranged" everywhere, but especially in France, for sufficient and sound reasons of economy and property: royal marriages and the like: Yorkshire farmers' marriages, Irish peasant marriages. The other marriage of mere juxtaposition may turn out well enough, and is likely to turn out well enough, better than many of the marriages arranged by human prudence, provided there be principle and conscience on each side, but it is accidental only: or, if you call it "arranged," "arranged" only by Dame Nature in a careless mood and in off hours: by Dame Nature, first and greatest of match-making mothers. Of all the other marriages not misfits nor tragical nor even casual and accidental, a very few recommend themselves to the world's judgment as the product of a wise and deep natural instinct of conscience, principle and heart, proceeding from the whole nature of the man and woman, physical, moral, intellectual, and spiritual, as an inspiration of Nature in her serious mood, wiser than any calculation of good policy and statesmanship. And plays and stories are written by men and women, especially by women, in honour of these truly romantic marriages, which loom larger to women's imagination than to the imagination of men.

But other plays and stories are also written by realists and cynics to illustrate how the most matter-of-fact and merely prudential marriages, without any pretence of any kind of romantic love, may turn out to be wiser than the marriages, often tragical, which began in a species at least of romantic love, in the masculine and feminine passion for physical beauty : in the giddy pleasure of the eye. But yet after all, and there is the point I am trying tediously to make, there is little feeling to-day in this partially Christian world, that love and marriage are the special field of *malicious* deities bent on wrecking man's life : that love and marriage are the special and prime lure and trap which malicious deities set for man's undoing. Yet this was the point of view continually of ancient Paganism. Love was the field for the play of Aphrodite's malice : love was not love alone but madness and death and unceasing warfare (like the innocent but awkward epitaph over John Jones and Mary his wife—"their warfare is accomplished"); madness, death and unceasing warfare, crazy passion, lamentation, mourning and woe.

ὦ παῖδες ἥ τοι κύπρις οἱ κύπρις μόνον·  
 ἔστιν μὲν Ἀδης ἔστι δ' ἄφθιτος βία  
 ἔστιν δὲ λύσσα μαινάς ἔστι δ' ἡμερος  
 ἄκρατος, ἔστ' ὀιμωγμός

This is a fragment of Sophocles : Horace wrote

Sic visum Veneri cui placet impares  
 Formas atque animos sub juga aenea  
 Saevo mittere cum joco.

To outlive this fatal passion was to escape a tyrannous and brutal slave-driver. The Pagan poets are hardly prepared to admit that if Nature's pairing instinct be guided and controlled and governed by the other instincts of conscience and principle, then, though marriage will still illustrate [passing illusions, yet will

it, when illusion has passed, remain a blessing and a discipline in the best lessons of life, in affection, sympathy, patience, mutual consideration : till it becomes at last in the full sense a sacrament, the inward and spiritual grace which has blossomed from the scrupulous adherence to the outward and visible wedding-vows and wedding-ring. As it happens, I have read since writing these words Miss Sheila Kaye-Smith's *The George and the Crown* ; it is a good sermon on that text. Athenian Pagans regarded marriage as necessary politically, but as a very tiresome tax : for society, help and comfort, for entertainment and amusement, an Athenian turned instead to the clever and educated Ionian woman whom he did not and could not marry : he immured his wife behind walls and in the attics (the word seems significant but is an accident) and tried to turn her into a doll, or a doll-cook : there was no pretence of even a passing passion and idealism of each by each : passion and idealism demanded intellect, and intellect could only be found with declassed Ionian courtesans or handsome Athenian boyhood : passionate love and idealism was a hazardous joy, more or less a torment during mature life, and a vain and tormenting memory in impotent old age. Things were much better, of course, in Rome, the Romans not being intellectuals : but living more in their wise instincts and their natural emotions.

But to-day even the Irish peasant and the Yorkshire farmer and their commercial brides and grooms marrying for lands and money, for a couple of cows and a herd of pigs, or a feather bed, are not likely to feel that malice and mischief chiefly have made their match. The Pagan point of view has largely passed, though the Christian has only very partially arrived. How can it ? until the practice of Christian marriage arrives and establishes itself more firmly.

The occasions and preliminaries of the average marriage are fairly enough described by the writers of *Vers de Societe*—like Mr. Locker Lampson.

Our love was like most other loves,  
A little glow, a little shiver,  
A rosebud and a pair of gloves,  
And “fly not ever” on the river.

Nothing objectionable about such verses, or such loves, but they hardly go beyond Clough’s “juxtaposition it is, and what is juxtaposition?” Little guarantee in them of real congeniality, little promise that marriage will be at its best, and will be the best thing that life can offer. And so with Death also: the Christian atmosphere and the Pagan are far apart. A mid-Victorian believer is bound to hold and tries manfully to hold that his bereavements are for his good, and are better for the wife or son or daughter he has lost, and for his own soul also, than their continued life would have been: bereavements are a warning to him that he needed this affliction to save him from slackness and indolence in his bearing of the cross: the neo-Christians about him, who are also neo-Pagans, and who are in the majority perhaps to-day, wonder at his confident assumption of a second and better world: for themselves they have returned to the Sadducee or educated Pagan’s view of death, but the mid-Victorian believer is not a hypocrite: his is the logical view, for a man of his strict creed, literally interpreted: and not merely logical: he may well think that the lightning flash of intuition and of overwhelming emotion which accompanies the immediate pang of bereavement (on those days of bereavement when emotion is most profound and most able to overleap the barriers of this life, when even the features of the outward landscape are branded upon his mind and photographed on the plates of memory, as no



other scenes have been permanently photographed before or since) : he may well think, I repeat, that the lightning flash of intuition and emotion which accompanies bereavement and which tells him that the parting is not for ever ; he may well think that that lightning flash is a better and truer light than the drab light of common sense and common day, into which his emotion will shortly fade away.

At any rate, if Aristotle was right in supposing that there is no cold-blooded coolly-calculating casuistry possible, to determine beforehand the right and wrong in moral problems, and the true or false in moral dilemmas, if Aristotle was right that a man, confronted with moral dilemmas, must be left to the intuitive emotion of the moment to decide what is the right thing to do, and what is the true thing to think—*ἐν τῇ αἰσθήσει ἢ κρίσει*—and that only so can his decisions be trusted to be right and his judgments to be true (that is, of course, always provided that he has kept his habits and his instincts straight, and has not become colour-blind in morals), if all this be so, will not the Aristotelean argument be reasonably applied also to the dilemmas of bereavement ? and is not the constraining necessity to answer the dilemma along emotional lines rather than along the lines of common sense and blank materialism, a moral not less than an emotional necessity ? Mr. Hardy in his best novel *Tess* thinks otherwise, and makes his hero bid farewell to Tess for ever : it is a question for temperament, for moral temperament and temperature—as against intellectual atmosphere and temperament : it is a question between the two interpretations of life, between the first, the natural and the instinctive : and the second, the acquired and doctrinaire interpretation.

Personally I doubt if the intellectual judgment can be trusted in moral and emotional dilemmas : no, nor

even in mere questions of fact, wherever personal feeling intervenes : the intellectuals are as much at the mercy of personal likes and dislikes for their judgment, as any other men : more at the mercy of such things, than the illiterate but simple Christian : even a child may be a better guide as well as a more edifying and entertaining companion.

Children are in fact often much more edifying companions : as friends they “ wash and do not wash ” : as the Greeks would say : I mean they do not flatter one and therefore do not fail one ; that is, as friends they “ wash ” and yet they are not afraid of eating with unwashed hands (another attraction) ; or take an illustration somewhat similar to the illustration of bereavement. Devout clergymen—you have all known them—are dismayed by the signs of the presence in themselves of a fatal disease : their feelings and language appear to belie and falsify the prayer for accomplishing the number of the elect and hastening the Kingdom, and the text that to be with Christ is far better : yet they are not actors and hypocrites : only inconsistent men and women divided between their creed and aspiration on one side, and their human nature on the other ; and disposed for a moment to regret the amazing gamble to which they have committed themselves and their lives : until death actually comes near or bereavement is knocking at the door of their hearts, they shun their creed and shrink from their creed’s interpretation of life : when these things actually come, they fall back upon their creed and their interpretation : logically they are quite right, and morally, intellectually, they are just human.

Even their Master shrank for one brief moment ; to prove His humanity. Was Dr. Johnson a hypocrite, because, robust Christian though he was, or because he was a robust Christian, he was mortally scared of

death? Naturally he was so scared: with all his intellectual arrogance he was a morally humble man: he knew that he excelled more in conversation than in Christianity, that he had imbibed more tea than Christian spirit: he was naturally unwilling to leave the land of tea and good talk for the more exacting society of just men made perfect, and for new work which might not be so intellectual: or where he might himself have to become a Boswell, and a satellite: he has himself somewhere celebrated (I cannot identify the passage) the wisdom and virtue of obscure and dumb persons; he has also in his familiar and admirable prayer diagnosed scientifically the relative importance of action and unimportance of knowledge in this world, "where so much is to be done and so little to be known, and where our business is to restrain our minds from unprofitable and vain inquiries, from difficulties merely curious, and doubts impossible to be solved; and to wait with patient expectation for the time when the souls whom God has accepted shall be satisfied with knowledge."

It is idle and silly to scoff at believers for hypocrisy in the presence of death. It is essential to the good of this world that this world should come first to the minds even of saints and practising Christians: they must feel this world their home and the scene of present labour and not a mere pilgrimage, as the Irish Catholics think, if they are to serve it best: why doesn't the Catholic Church rebuild the slums of Dublin? The pilgrimage doctrine is very poetic and fascinating, but it leads to a loss of good labour and to the misapplication of good labour: if men preach and live on the text "how can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" or "here we have no continuing city but we seek one to come," they may be saints like Cardinal Newman, but they will not do as much as they might, to improve this unfortunate world and wipe out the

slums of Dublin : conversely if they feel about it, as the layman does, that it is and ought to be their first thought, and their present home, they may improve it.

Besides, of course, if they push their pilgrimage theory to the point of certainty, so as to be unconscious of the gamble, and to become fanatics, they destroy religion and lose their religious life while saving it : so long as their religion is so far real to them, as to enable them to face temptation without yielding and to be honest (really honest) and truth-speaking and courageous and generous, religion has served its purpose and helped this world, without going too far and spoiling its possessors both for this world and the next : *μηδὲν ἄγαν*, nothing too much, applies nowhere more than in religion : it does not negate or contradict sound religion, it saves it from itself, from unsound fanaticism : it leaves it safe and sound to save the world from both extremes, from mere fanaticism and mere materialism : without it men might be tempted to universal suicide, as Buddhists and pessimists, or to mere American commercialism, as hustlers, boosters, boomsters, boasters, and advertisers : which would be the worse fate who knows ? both sectary and secularist make life unintelligible and worthless.

The difference between the Pagan and the Christian "gentleman" is another and a third step in advance due to Christianity.

To pass to another branch of our subject, it is interesting to watch the relations and reactions of the spiritual and the legal, which, of course, is the current and popular interpretation of life : the interpretation provided by Acts of Parliament and prompting Acts of Parliament. The two interpretations still overlap and unite in many matters : but the popular Parliamentary and legal interpretation tends to change in two different directions : it



tends to become more easy, loose, and liberal than the spiritual interpretation, and to remove spiritual anathemas from the statute book : and, on the other hand, it has of late years introduced a number of spiritual laws, once only recognized by the churches, into the statute book. Fifty years ago, legal law avoided certain areas, as areas where only Christian law, or the law of conscience, held good : and where legal law could not interfere without being guilty of trespass. A man could do what he chose, without interference from the legal law, about his wife's property and personal peace, and about his children's education. The Christian Church which had interfered to canonize feminine qualities and feminine ways of life, and enhance the status of women, forbade tyranny and neglect : but the husband and father could be tyrannical and neglectful towards wife and child without interference from the law of the land : the law at best was understood to limit the thickness of the stick with which they might be corrected. To-day the wife is protected in her property from her husband's dishonest greed, and the children's right to education is protected : legal law has advanced into fields to which before it did not claim access, and has taken over duties and responsibilities on behalf of women and children which it did not recognize before : which it left to the Church before.

And the same is true in the case of poor peasants, Irish or Hindoo : the shibboleths of John Bright and Manchester, about freedom of contract, which first permitted Irish land-loving tenants to cling to their poor Irish soil (where Englishmen and Scotsmen would have chosen emigration) by promising impossible rents, in order to remain on the soil they loved not wisely but too well : and then expelled them from the soil when the absurd rents were not paid : which permitted Rajput tenants in Hindostan to mortgage

their holdings to Hindoo money-lenders, until they lost them : these shibboleths with their worse corollaries of child-labour in the mines and factories of England, have been swept away : and the peasant protected against himself : and the old Hebrew law of Jubilee, by which the ancient Hebrews fought THEIR Hebrew money-lenders, has been re-enacted in some degree in British India by British officers. (It will have little chance though now, with the Hindoo middle-class administration and the new system and the very undemocratic so-called democracy of the late Mr. Montagu and Mr. Curtis, the two young doctrinaires who have destroyed Indian peace and security to serve a slogan.) But, on the other hand, other obligations and duties which the law of the State took over from Christianity and from the churches, are no longer recognized by the State to the same degree, and are shrinking into obligations and duties binding upon men only as Christians and churchmen : binding only on their consciences therefore : not enforceable at law.

Divorce, for example, which the Church only recognizes in a limited degree, and about which her Founder dissented from the laxity of Jewish law, is again recognized to-day by legal law in a far wider degree : divorce for desertion ; for insanity, for incompatibility even (in the United States) is possible : for anything, for nothing : divorce for refusal of "conjugal rights" is possible : a man or woman cannot bring an action to-day in England, I think, for such restitution : it is taken for granted since the Jackson case came before Lord Esher that such rights obviously ought not to be secured by law : must rest on consent : but if so, it follows—though it was not the law when the case came before Lord Esher—that the husband or wife refused such restitution is entitled to a divorce : again, divorced persons, innocent or

guilty, can legally marry again now: the churches may not sanction the re-marriage of the guilty, and cannot be compelled to celebrate it: but the churches' law is ideal law and Christian law, not legal law: the area and liberties of legal law have been extended: the range of Christian law as legal law has been restricted. It is all very natural: for it is a very simple and familiar experience that the law of conscience and Christianity does not lag behind with the transient and legal law of the State, that is of the popular opinion and popular wishes of the moment.

Divorce is only one field out of many where the two laws are bifurcating. Again, the law of the land as administered by popular juries will not in practice punish all infanticide as strictly and severely as it did thirty years ago: juries will not convict an unhappy and desperate unmarried mother of murder when she destroys her child: foolish partisans of women's rights will even make the unhappy girl a sort of heroine, and give receptions for her, with the same flippancy with which American divorcées will ask their previous five husbands to afternoon tea to meet the sixth: these are the ethics of parlour Bolshevism: and are an affront to Christian ethics rather than to the history of the race: infanticide was recognized by the old Pagan societies as inevitable, as a negligible trifle or as an obvious necessity: it is so practised in parts of Hindostan still: it was so practised a hundred years ago in the Highlands of Scotland: Sir Michael O'Dwyer asked once why there were no precedents for the mad extravagance proposed for the wedding of a Rajput princess: an old man answered falteringly, "You ought to know, Sahib: our customs cut off the supply of princesses in the days of old."

The sanctity of life then is not protected as jealously by juries to-day as it was fifty years ago in the matter

of this very ancient horror, infanticide: our ruder forefathers in the Scotch Highlands, for example, a hundred years ago, had no more scruple than the magistrates of Plato's and Aristotle's ideal states, in removing deformed or defective children: they were as callous as the ancient Spartans with whom Plato coincided: the question which arises, and which I have never been able to answer, in these matters, is whether Plato's system is to be called an anticipation of modern medicine and materialistic science, or an atavism surviving from ancient Sparta: but why trouble about this answer, I have sometimes felt? Extremes meet: the customs of ancient barbarians and of modern science are identically the same, and even the metaphysics are much more likely to be the same, than the man in the street ever imagines: he thinks of cannibalism, for example, as the horridest coarsest barbarism, but Herodotus, who was the most susceptible and inquiring spirit of an inquiring and susceptible race, warns his readers not to be so crude and hasty: cannibalism may be, he says, and has been sometimes, crude metaphysics, not crude appetite: the cannibal thinks to derive the virtues of his victim from his flesh: he is only repeating the nonsense which one can read daily in the daily papers from some crazy exponent of diet, some authority on vitamins and calories, that man is what he eats: *homo est quod est*: common appetite as well as common sense, it now appears, is based on metaphysics: there are hundreds of modern anthropologists who have confirmed Herodotus: neither they nor Herodotus suggest the Darwinian explanation of cannibalism, that it is just animalism.

In the matter of birth-control again, it is easy to see that the law of the land, as enforced and enforceable, tends to follow Aristotle's scientific distinctions, rather than scrupulous sentiment and religious in-



stinet : it is unlawful, said Aristotle, to destroy life once conceived : not unlawful to prevent conception : the law to-day hesitates to interfere with the birth-control exercised by contraception : the doctors are radically divided, both women and men, into two schools : the methods of contraception more widely known and practised : to prevent their advertisement and propaganda becomes more and more difficult : the social workers, the clergy themselves, are divided : the advertisers and propagandists no doubt are open to prosecution, but prosecution is difficult and punishment uncertain.

More liberty, that is, has been given by legal law to men and women, and the legality at least of such practices becomes more difficult to dispute : it may all be against, it must often be against, ideal law and Christian law : but it is no longer clearly against legal law, that is popular opinion.

It is a logical step from all this that the right to take life in other obvious cases, is more recognized and less punishable in legal law : suicide is forbidden still by legal law and the would-be suicide is arrested and tried for an offence : but juries will not convict and the churches themselves will not refuse decent Christian burial : we throw the responsibility on the would-be suicide : he or she may be breaking, is most likely to be breaking, the Christian and ideal law, but they will not be readily condemned by a law court for using their liberty to destroy themselves, if they think fit : great statesmen, great novelists, great professors of moral philosophy, have thought fit to do so within the last hundred years : it is a law for conscience rather than for the State, that suicide is " unlawful " : and Plato and Aristotle found it a hard saying even for conscience, and shirked and dodged it, as other men dodge and shirk it to-day.

And in the same way there is an unwritten law

which often influences juries more than the judge and the written law, when adultery is avenged by the husband. For the same reason doctors will not be criticized for practising euthanasia, for helping the incurable out of a life of pain, or for destroying unnatural births : and probably the obligation to save desperately wounded and damaged and “impossible” lives will be more and more challenged : since the Great War, which went hand in hand with increased skill in medicine and surgery, hundreds of survivors are living without hope or happiness or usefulness or reason : should they have been saved to such a life ? should they not have been allowed to slip out of it while they could ? The war has advertised widely the horror of such useless survival. The dubious and difficult maxim, “God helps those who help themselves,” will be appealed to not only to justify anæsthetics—no one any longer needs to appeal to it for that purpose, though very scrupulous believers used to doubt the lawfulness of using it, when Simpson first discovered it—but to justify birth-control by contraception : to justify suicide : euthanasia : and the like. There was the case within the last year in England of the poor father who destroyed out of pity a desperately afflicted child. The liberty of man and woman in these things—so far as the law of the State is concerned—is enlarged, and likely to be enlarged further : their liberty according to the moral law, the ideal law, the Christian law, will be left to their own conscience and the conscience of the doctors attending them : to forbid such exercise of liberty seems to make life too horrible to the mind of the average man and woman whose opinion makes the law of the State, or too horrible for the lives so saved and yet not saved, in any useful sense : or too horrible from both points of view.

A lawyer has a right and a duty to defend a criminal

on trial for his life, even though he is sure in his inner mind that his client is guilty : it does not follow that a doctor is bound to prolong a life or to bring into the world lives that have no prospect of health or happiness : the two cases are not parallel but are far apart.

Which is another way of saying that theology and theories of the immortal soul have lost or are losing their control of popular opinion, and therewith of the law of the State : theological law shrinks and fades into a law for the churches, and for the Christian conscience : while the State ceases to accept such ideal law, and ceases to live in the theological and Christian atmosphere : it lives more and more in the atmosphere of common sense and secularism and utilitarianism, even materialism.

Sir Oliver Mowat, forty years ago, ruled that Ontario was a Christian community : Lord Aberdeen, twenty years ago, protested that the University of Toronto was not a secular university, merely a non-denominational or better an inter-denominational university : most of us sympathize with the Premier and the Governor : but changes of thought, changes of circumstance and the influx of Jews from Eastern Europe have weakened the practical application of their argument : though not so much as at first sight appears : because Jews and Christians recognize better to-day their natural affinity : they have the only two real religions of the world, and what is more they come of the same stock.

The bearing of this on Prohibition is more difficult to appraise : Prohibition can only be defended morally, whether by State or Church, on behalf of women and children, and only so far as alcohol interfered with the rights of women and children : rights always recognized by the churches, and of recent years recognized also by the State. In itself and apart from

the wrong done by the drunkard to women and children, hard drinking and drunkenness is an offence against ideal law, moral law and Christian law : but not against the law of the State : rather—as Aristotle used to argue—Prohibition is an offence against moral and ideal law, for it banishes a virtue, the free and willing practice of temperance : and turns what was a true virtue into a poor compulsion and a trumpery *pis aller* : just as Plato's compulsory socialism and communism destroyed, says Aristotle, true generosity and true affection and true self-control. Prohibition only becomes a law of the State when popular opinion has been so exasperated and scandalized by the drunkards, and by the wrongs they inflict on their innocent families, that a majority vote forbids altogether the making and drinking of alcohol : but human nature being what it is, and drinking being the human passion that it is, with young men out of good fellowship, with old men out of boredom and out of despair and disappointment, with no one—to speak broadly—for its own sake, except with the moderate drinkers, who injure no one and need no interference from the State ; and, furthermore, drinking having become doubly human and natural in this age of industrialism and education, in which industrialism has made life drab and emptied life of pleasure, while education has made every one much more conscious of the drabness and the absence of pleasures, it is only fitfully and spasmodically and by violent effort, that a popular opinion against any and every use of alcohol can be organized and maintained. Atmosphere governs the Prohibition movement absolutely, and to enforce Prohibition continuously becomes wellnigh impossible : genuine enforcement, in fact, implies the universality and ubiquity of the necessary atmosphere : but it is only universal and ubiquitous where it has become part of the interpretation of life and



of the reigning religion : as in Turkey, so far as Turks remain true to their religion.

But to introduce such a clause into religion, a clause so trivial and artificial and superficial, is only possible where religion is shallow and unworthy of the name. It has never been a clause in Christianity for obvious reasons, in spite of the handful of fanatics who are prepared to reject Christianity if it is proved that the wine of the miracle of Cana was fermented and intoxicating. In short, the bearing of Prohibition—though it is one of the most serious political problems of this continent—upon the religious interpretation of life and its atmosphere appears to amount merely to this, that it illustrates the contention of these papers that religious interpretation and religious atmosphere are everything : if an anodyne, and an exhilaration, and a consolation of life, such as alcohol, makes a universal appeal to man, that appeal can only be resisted and successfully forbidden if the resistance become a part of religion : but such resistance ought never to become a part of religion except for drunkards : happier and more normal beings will continue to shrug their shoulders and treat the controversy as a tempest in a wine-glass. If they forswear the glass, it will be on St. Paul's principle (though *he* did not forswear the glass), for the sake of the weaker brethren : if only the weaker brethren would be good enough to increase in strength, the tempest would subside.

Anyhow, it is a scandal and sin chiefly for our race and the Slav : the Latin races do not drink to excess : not even of their own decent wine : the worst offenders are the Russians, Irish, Scotch, Canadians, and Americans, who prefer bad whisky : the next bad are the English and Germans who muddle themselves with strong beer. If Canadians would only consent to imbibe sauterne, when they wanted a relief from industrialism and politics, the agitation and the con-

troversy and the horrors of alcohol would subside and be forgotten, and leave neither aching heads nor aching hearts behind : if Canadians would only learn to manufacture a decent light wine, a step would be gained which even the politicians could not misuse and turn into electioneering : but our race does not excel in the lighter thoughts and fancies, in the light wines and fine sauces and sauternes of life : in France—say the French—are twenty sauces and no religion : in England twenty religions and no sauce or light wine.

“The human race,” says a flippant Dutch historian, Van Laun, “has survived theology : in due time it will survive industrialism : it has lived through cholera and plagues, high heels and blue laws : it will survive the drabness of commerce.” Well, theology is still needed to take the sting out of industrialism : and theology is itself also the sting which Socrates like a dying bee left embedded in his hearers for their good : Pope, I think it was, thought to banish it by writing “that the highest study of mankind is man” : there is no point in the old tag : except one which Pope did not intend : he meant the highest study of mankind is man not God : the highest study of mankind, he should have written, is man, or God, not apes nor rabbits nor rats nor guinea-pigs : neither physics nor chemistry nor biology nor engineering : and the study of man or the humanities, he might profitably have added, is one and the same with the study of theology and religion. Each is a study of the improvement of man’s conduct and character, of the purifying of his faith, hope and love.

The two sciences, the humanities and theology, spring from the same root and are dependent on the same ideas and theories. There is no real or lasting antithesis or conflict : Plato was a theologian and Aristotle a humanitarian, but their affinities are much more real than their differences : they have alike

one antagonist and rival, commercialism and materialism and secularism ; and even commercialism is sometimes a rival more than an antagonist. I mean that the profound instinct for honesty which marked the commerce of Early Rome and has marked the commerce of England cannot be explained away as the best policy, but is, somehow or other, a part of their supernaturalism. Worldliness and other-worldliness, for all their differences, meet and unite in the supernatural virtue of honesty. Greek honesty, which was the best policy, was always slipping into dishonesty. Honesty was not a part of the Greek atmosphere : it was a calculated and artificial compromise : it was not a part of Greek religion : it was, when it showed itself at all, only worldly prudence, which the best Greek religion, the religion of Delphi, sought vainly to turn into religious principle.

When Glaucus, the dishonest Greek, asked the oracle of Delphi whether he might appropriate the money entrusted to him, the oracle told him to go ahead : he went ahead and took the money and came to grief and reproached the oracle : the oracle retorted that he should never have asked the question : that it had answered him according to his folly : honesty is an eternal principle and dishonesty destroys in the long run, and sometimes even in the short run, those who practise it. Glaucus had suffered even in his own life for his dishonesty, but his race and his descendants (and his State) would have suffered even if he had escaped for his lifetime : honesty must be an atmosphere and a principle, not a calculation of chances and possibilities and circumstances and the best policy. Even Greek religion—often only a matter of ritual and feasts and dances and religious phrases—could on occasion and from Delphi preach principle and honesty and a God-fearing interpretation of life and a God-fearing atmosphere.



Yes, and perhaps I ought to modify what I said about materialism and secularism as antagonists of religion : at this moment and on this continent even secularism and materialism are rivals rather than antagonists of religion : each of the two is delivering in its own different way different men from a third and mutual antagonist, Oriental pessimism and despair : the Oriental Buddhism which seeks to escape altogether from the wheel of life, to shuffle off the coil of personality, to slip back like the dewdrop into the shining sea : this is the creed of all creeds to paralyse faith, hope and charity, to take the salt and savour and meaning out of life : even our crude and childish American materialism seems an ally, though much disguised, in this battle against universal despair. In fact, the very same man whom I quoted to you before for his black picture of the ultimate destiny of this world and every soul in it, is the most sanguine believer in, and the most urgent advocate of, the reforms which for the time at least (he thinks) will turn it into a Heaven on Earth and replace the need of any other visionary Heaven.

Here is Mr. Bertrand Russell's optimism which compensates (by Nature's law) for his extreme pessimism about other worlds and another life.

Mr. Russell wrote a few years ago (in 1916) :

Few men seem to realize how many of the evils from which we suffer are wholly unnecessary and could be abolished by a united effort within a few years : if a majority in every civilized country so desired, we could within twenty years abolish all abject poverty : quite half the illness in the world, the whole economic slavery which binds down nine-tenths of our population : we could fill the world with beauty and joy and secure the reign of universal peace. It is only because men are apathetic that this is not achieved : only because imagination is sluggish, and what always has been is regarded as what always must be. With good will, generosity, and a little intelligence all these things could be brought about. What is wanted is hope, not personal hope,



for our separate lives, but hope for the world and belief in the destiny of mankind : now while the world is dark, and pain and strife surround us, I summon you to this hope and this belief and to the courage that will give them life.

If the western mind, you perceive, becomes pessimistic in religious things, its own nature in compensation fills it with an amazing optimism, an amazing hope and faith in the immediate and near future : as large and sanguine as its vision of a second life is short-sighted and incredulous.

#### IV

Let me begin again at the beginning and return to the religious interpretation of life and to its atmosphere.

Most of you have been annoyed by the proverbial philosophy of countless proverbial philosophers and Martin Tuppens who tell you that it does not matter what a man's creed is if his life be good : you have retorted : " Of course it does not matter, but why plague yourself with democratic catchwords and superficialities : ' *if* his life be good ' indeed ! why you might as well say ' it does not matter what poisonous air he is breathing, what germs and microbes he is swallowing, if his health be good ' : is his health likely to be good, and still more to remain good, if he continues to breathe poison ? How many persons' health will stand it ? Not many : in spite of the power of Nature to acclimatize herself to a good deal of mischief and to produce her own antidotes and antitoxins."

You have been annoyed with this cheap clap-trap about creeds not mattering, if the life be true : you have recognized that it is one of the nuisances of popular education that it produces proverbial philosophies and popular trash of this sort : you do not want to be always tilting at these windmills : to

become a credulous Don Quixote and take them seriously.

The point you feel, is this, that atmosphere is everything : that truth, the only truth that matters, the truth that is true to man's most essential need, the need of a broad humanity and a broad religion, is a true atmosphere and subjective truth : this subjective truth and true atmosphere will in nine cases out of ten dominate objective facts and difficulties : but in nine cases out of ten the subjective truth of a true atmosphere must be painfully created by instinct and example and home life, if it is to face the difficulties of objective fact : only in the one rare case out of ten are these difficulties so negligible and unimportant as to have no chance to seduce the natural man : and that one case is, if he be that rare creature, *anima naturaliter Christiana* : and a man so happily constituted, that even without the slow and patient lessons of instinct and example and home influence, and without patient willing, and the slow and painful and unconscious absorption of a good atmosphere, his life and actions, his thoughts and feelings, are bound to be right, whatever be his surroundings and the objective facts of his life, because he was born a Christian, with an inherent subjective Christianity already formed in him : just as a few happily constituted bodies cannot be poisoned by germs and microbes, however poisonous the environment. If this be true, atmosphere is everything : in the case of our one man out of ten, *naturaliter Christianus*, it is a subjective atmosphere proof against externals from the first : in the case of the other nine, it is a subjective atmosphere not proof against externals unless and until very carefully built up and fostered and nourished : but made largely by externals, so largely that it cannot continue true and right, if the externals are false and corrupting. Let me consider the

atmosphere which some men breathe and its effect on them.

Psycho-analysis and the doctrines of the late Dr. Coué have been responsible for a good deal of nonsense and worse : the Coué cult has made a number of silly women talk and think too much about their health, and has provoked the unbeliever to scoffing. The psycho-analysts again are continually building on a narrow Darwinism, explaining human instincts as monkey instincts, misinterpreting and misrepresenting the greatest of Greek tragedies as turning on unnatural love, whereas it turns on the desperate efforts of the hero, poor Œdipus, to avoid unnatural love<sup>1</sup>; and generally depressing the moral thermometer or barometer in the name of Darwin : the psycho-analysts have decided also that Hamlet was in love with his mother : they might as well have decided with the other dreamers that Bacon wrote *Hamlet* : but psycho-analysis and the Coué school and the behaviourists have at least hit on the truth of atmosphere : have recognized that truth is subjective : that there is nothing true but thinking makes it so : as Shakespeare (or Bacon) said.

The difficulty and the problem is to determine limits : “ with the last step in disillusionment,” said Dr. Maudsley, “ comes the first step in degeneracy ” : all happiness, peace and goodness rest on illusions : we are all living like the young man and his father in Ibsen’s *Wild Duck* on illusions : destroy the illusions, as the half-baked idealist in that story sought to do, and you destroy life : encourage the illusions as the more sagacious and cynical Dr. Redding sought to do, and life retains its value and virtues.

The poor simple scholar, for example, who is building mares’-nests out of his scholarship (like Casaubon

<sup>1</sup> They deserve never to be forgiven for that shameful phrase, the Œdipus complex.

in *Middlemarch*) will continue to be laborious and happy, though no one reads his books and takes them seriously, except the few Dr. Reddings : and they do *not* take THEM seriously, but encourage him to write for the sake of his peace of mind.

And so with the rest of us, though our illusions may not be as gross as that wild duck in the attic.

The greatest illusion to the Doctor Maudsleys of this age is Christianity : it has produced all the happiness, virtue, and value of life : the science of this age is finding it out to be a mirage ; and happiness and virtue and value are receding rapidly, as the north shore of the St. Lawrence recedes when you come to examine it critically from Metis : we are in process of disillusionment and degeneracy : ancient realism—called Paganism—made a hell out of old age for example ; old age, especially in the far north, became intolerable : not to the old themselves so much perhaps :—they often, like the typical Sadducee Maecenas,<sup>1</sup> felt that life at its worst was better than death—but to the relatives : when cold weather comes the Pagans seat the old man outside “ on the veranda.”

Christianity ameliorated his lot with the lot of women and other weak creatures : he was cared for, comforted and respected for his negative and feminine virtues : as Christianity recedes his life becomes harder. Even in this age of pity, and mercy, he is more apt to become again a nuisance pure and simple : as he was in Pagan Greece.

Now is it really conceivable—to put the question a second time—that this world is so constructed that all its possibilities of good rest on a dream and an illusion ? the dream of a young Jewish peasant-philosopher who has been till now the Redeemer, and the only real Redeemer, of the world ? Is it really conceivable, that the source of the best happiness and peace issues

<sup>1</sup> Seneca, *Epistles*, 101, 11.



—as Plato seems to suggest—out of noble lies? Some one suggests instead <sup>1</sup> that it is out of the irony of an ironical God, who used an accident, the laziness of a Roman soldier (instructed to break the legs of fainting criminals and hasten their end, but too lazy, or too decent, to do so), to palm off upon mankind the fable of a resurrection: whence two thousand years of betterment, until the fable was found out. (This sort of Divine irony, by the way, is more akin to Divine love than irony, and to an argument for Theism than for Divine irony.) But anyhow, is it not much more likely that the noble lies or benevolent irony, whichever it be, which have had such potency for good, are not after all “noble lies”—as Plato ironically called them—or Divine irony, but, as Plato probably meant, when he used the ironical phrase, “noble lies,” the ultimate and essential truth? a myth, in Plato’s terminology, but a myth which is only mythical in the sense that it is not true literally and in all its scaffolding? but yet is true in spirit: has the root of the whole matter in it, and is not mythical at bottom? that is what Plato meant by mythology: the truth which cannot be analysed, defined, and expressed, precisely and exactly in words, but only in figures and metaphors, through a glass darkly, and with reflections in which the different rays of truth have been broken up and separated and some of them intercepted and withheld. It is unfortunate that the world has forgotten what Plato meant by “myth” and has taken since his time to using the word in the sense of mere fancy and fiction.

But if so, what are the limits of noble lying? where do the lies cease to be noble and cease to be at bottom true? where do they pass into merely mischievous sentimentality and foolish sensibility? when does the man of feeling, of whom Mackenzie wrote, become a

<sup>1</sup> Mr. George Moore, for example.

nuisance and a corrupter of happiness, peace, virtue, value? when does Miss Austen's Marian, c.g., in *Sense and Sensibility*, become a nuisance and a danger to herself and her friends? when is sensibility or "enthusiasm" not only not necessary to man's happiness but a mere evil? For the connotation of these words "sensibility" and "enthusiasm" shifts and shifts from age to age and is never constant. In any case, it is obvious that the illusion, so to call it, of Christianity dies slowly and hard: there is so much ultimate truth in it that it lingers long and deep in the hearts of those even who imagine that they have outlived it: the Matthew Arnolds and the Huxleys of the last century thought they had outlived it: but rather they still lived it: it was part of their unconscious instincts; they could not forget it: they could not ignore it in their lives and deeds, or even in their thoughts and feelings: they continued to live and act and to think and feel as Christians.

You remember Huxley's indignation with St. Paul: Huxley took that difficult and much controverted passage in 1 Corinthians xv.: "If Christ be not risen, then are we of all men most miserable: let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die: be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners": and he interpreted it literally, as it is generally interpreted, and not as irony: not as a rebuke administered to a deceitful and evil suggestion: and having taken it literally he proceeded to denounce St. Paul for making the deepest of human instincts, the Socratic instinct to do the right at all costs and in the scorn of consequence, depend upon the merely historical question of Christ's resurrection. St. Paul, he said, separated Christianity from man's deepest instincts, as later apostles of Christ have refused to do, as Frederick William Robertson, for example, always refused to do: Huxley agreed with Robertson, and

was amazed at St. Paul's faithlessness to man's best instincts : he was a better Christian than St. Paul, he said, as he interpreted St. Paul.

But to see how necessary the atmosphere of Christianity is for honest living and acting and thinking and feeling according to the best instincts, we must jump a generation or two, and study the descendants of these eminent Victorians who thought they had discarded Christianity : their literal and their spiritual descendants : the falling off—if there be a falling off, and there seems to be—will appear in them : they will not be able to live in the same high vein and strike the same high notes, without the same ennobling but illusory atmosphere in which their fathers lived : they are going to live at a lower range : to live more and more in 'Ercles vein, as Shakespeare calls it : in the vein of that brave swashbuckler and polygamous animal : or it may be even in King Cambyzes' vein : in the vein of a tyrant and a madman much more degenerate than poor 'Ercles.

Some one will say, "All this talk about atmosphere is all right but too obvious" : nine men out of ten not only admit it but always act upon it : nine men out of ten govern their life on the principle that it is atmosphere, spirit, that counts, not creed or letter : they are pragmatists one and all : they take their children to church, they send them to Sunday schools : not because they take the creed of the churches *au pied de la lettre*, not because they take it literally : they take it with many many grains of salt rather : but they want that atmosphere for their children : and they are content that their children when they grow up shall do the same with *their* children ; shall no longer for themselves take the creed and catechisms and confessions literally but shall take them for their atmosphere : and for *their children* : and *their* children, when they grow up, will do the same for *their* children :

and so on *ad infinitum* : religion is an atmosphere, not a creed : at best an atmosphere and a temporary atmosphere for children : milk for babes ; at worst an honest, cheerful, patient, determined whistling, to keep one's courage up, in a dark and quite impenetrable world.

Well, I think the drawback to this familiar policy of parents and to this familiar admission of a double standard for measuring religious truth, one for grown men and women and another for children, is that those who practise it do not know their Plato well : Plato has warned fathers that there is continually and almost continuously an awkward reaction, when young men and young women awake to find that their creeds and catechisms are not taken literally by their parents : they ask their parents quite early, often at eight years of age even, if not at ten or twelve, at any rate long before the real years of discretion, long before they have reached manhood and womanhood, and are thirty years old : " But do *you*, father, do you, mother, take Christianity seriously ? " and if they see, whatever the verbal answer may be, that their parents do *not* take their creeds literally, why then, says Plato, they become spiritual orphans ; they suffer orphanhood of the soul : they have parents after the flesh and parents after the spirit : their creeds and catechisms are their parents after the spirit : and these two are one as long as they suppose their parents after the flesh to accept their parents after the spirit literally : but when they begin to doubt their creeds and catechisms they have lost their spiritual parents, and they are orphans in spirit though both parents after the flesh may survive.

And then what happens, continues Plato ? they have lost their spiritual bearings and moorings : in the deepest, that is in the spiritual sense, they are orphans : alone in the world without a creed and



without a God : and then they are tempted to turn away from their spiritual parents, who are dead, and from the parents after the flesh, whom they find to be deceivers and not serious, to the flatterers : they are in fact in the position of children, says Plato, who have found out that their supposed parents are not real parents : that they themselves are only supposititious children, adopted children : and they cannot any longer feel the same unfailing love and trust in these so-called parents, who have imposed upon them and have turned out not to be their real parents : and they are tempted to turn from them to the flatterers. And who are the flatterers ? The flatterers in Plato's moving parable are the pleasures of the body : cakes and ale remain : ginger is hot in the mouth still : if no creeds and catechism are still standing, pleasure still stands : for a few short years at least, pleasure still stands. " Our parents after the flesh," they say, " have humbugged us and our spiritual parents have died of a decline : then let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die " (as St. Paul is made to argue), " a short life and a merry one."

And what is the remedy for this orphanhood ? Plato can suggest none that is not impracticable : he can only suggest that this precocious thought and this precocious education which have gone to the parents with importunate questions (about creeds) which the parents cannot or will not answer seriously, should be artificially delayed for a long time : that the mental development and education of children should be arrested, till they are mature and have gained maturity's conservatism : till they have gained a conservatism of their own, such as their parents have gained before them : let them not be educated to think seriously, or to try philosophy, and have a philosophy, till they are thirty years of age : let no university and let no Socrates open their minds until

they are thirty : then they will not become youthful anarchists and "Bolshies" : then they will escape the influence of the flatterers, until they have reached the age when they are old enough to doubt the flatterers as they have previously doubted their parents : when life and experience, in short, shall have taught them that this is a world in which you must doubt anything you hear and most things that you see : by this time they will be armed against "the flatterers" and will be ready even to say, "Get thee behind me, Satan : I know too much : I have seen too much to take you more seriously, even *as* seriously, as I take my parents : they have been insincere with me, but they were sincere in a fashion : they were clinging to an atmosphere which I can now see is truer than your atmosphere of cakes and ale and cheap pleasures : the atmosphere of my parents 'washes,' to put it in a homely way : it stands the test of life and time : it lasts and wears and even looks better as time goes on : I want to keep it : it is an atmosphere, not a creed : but it has a spiritual truth behind it, and that is the only truth one can expect, I see now, in this world : henceforth I am content with it : I am a pragmatist : I am not afraid to accept 'noble lies' and I measure all dogmas by their values."

This, then, is Plato's impossible remedy for spiritual orphanhood, to defer universities and serious education and philosophy to the age of thirty : but though his solution is impossible, his statement of the difficulty is unanswerable : there *is* an intellectual crisis under present circumstances for all intellectual children, and intellectual youth, somewhat similar to the intellectual crisis for the childlike and backward races of India when they receive a Western education from Englishmen and are nevertheless debarred from the immediate autonomy and self-determination which a Western education encourages : they appeal to the

memory of Macaulay who introduced them to Western education : and their masters and suzerains now begin to regret that Macaulay ever lived and legislated for Hindostan : they wish that a millstone had been hung round his neck and that he had been drowned in the depths of the Indian Ocean. Present creeds and catechisms cannot face the intellectual unrest of the age, even for the European men and European children brought up under them and inoculated with their atmosphere, still less then for the Indian men and children, who have been educated out of their own atmosphere and systems but have never been acclimatized to Christianity : the creeds and catechisms break down and vanish, more or less, and the flatterers often win : the anarchists and Bolsheviks win, for a time at least, for a few hectic years : and even though the young Western man escape often with his life and gradually return, he is never the same again ; he has lost the zest and glow of the years of faith : he is blasé, disillusioned, enfeebled in mind, if not in body : weakened in faith and hope and charity. In other words, Western parents are pragmatists, even if they never heard the word : it is a novel and intellectual and Greek word : they are measuring creeds and catechisms by their atmosphere, their moral values, not by their letter and their scientific accuracy : they are trying to impose them on their children (and on their Eastern subjects) without explaining that the truth of the creeds and catechisms is spiritual rather than literal : that the creeds are true only in some mystical sense ; that is, that they are the highest truths a man can reach at present, and true to his heart's needs and the needs of his conscience : rather than true to the facts of human history or to the grosser facts of human nature and of the human body.

It would be a better solution perhaps of these

gigantic difficulties than Plato's impossible solution, to tell the children (Eastern and Western) more than they tell: to let them understand better in what sense the creeds and catechisms are true, and how their truth cannot be proved true except painfully by life and experience: but can be proved true so. If the children, Eastern and Western, old and young children, expected less of their creeds, the reaction and revulsion, when they found that neither they nor their present parents could take them as literally as in their happy childhood, would be less dangerous, and the "flatterers" would not win as many converts, and ruin, or at least darken and dampen for years, so many young lives: people would take more seriously the profound and passionate prayer and pray it more prayerfully, "Lord, I believe, help Thou my unbelief." For the converts to the flatterers, even when they come back after a few years sadder and wiser men, are apt to come back only as materialists and secularists, are apt to put aside religion as impossible and turn their minds to making the best of the fragments that remain: the fragments of the loaves and fishes: or to vary the metaphor, the flesh-pots of Egypt: they decide to cut their losses and start afresh and make a success of life as a money-making business, or as a business of winning fame and place and power.

The religion and dreams of a better world have passed, and though pleasure and cakes and ale have turned out to be a rather silly and superficial and cheap company of flattering impostors, success in the usual sense, success in life as a rich man or as a leader of men, remains worth while: and to this a sensible man will lend himself: he will prefer not to make a "mess of life" (against which the worldly-minded Jowett always warned his brilliant students), though he no longer dream of Heaven or of being a literal Christian, and a servant, however unprofitable, of



Christ and of the dreaming poets and hymnologists of Christianity, and of the mirage of a better world and of a second life, and of a passport into one of the many mansions, however humble, after this life, of which Christ had offered him a hope : he is not thinking now any longer of " climbing the steep ascent of Heaven " and finding rest from time to time on the way up, in one of those many mountain shelters in which Christ had encouraged him to believe : mountain shelters or dak bungalows, which would make it possible even for the ordinary climber to climb gradually higher from one life to another after resting for a time in each : until at the last he might see the mountain top, the Everest peak, and reach for himself at the last, after many lives it may be, the delectable goal. This reads like a very Platonic form of Christianity, but Plato was a *παιδαγωγὸς εἰς Χριστόν*, a schoolmaster to Christianity, and is more happy and helpful and suggestive, along these lines, I think, than along the lines of an impersonal soul, and an impersonal immortality.

The Platonic speculations of an impersonal soul, and an impersonal immortality, are more Buddhist and Eastern than Christian and Western : they suggest only the Buddhist craving to escape from the wheel of existence, to attain Nirvana : " the dew-drop slips into the shining sea " : the aspiration no doubt can be given a curious slant towards a less impersonal immortality as Tennyson contrived to slant it in his " Crossing the Bar," " when that which drew from out the boundless deep turns again *home* " : but the younger and more characteristic Tennyson was not attracted by Buddhism and the boundless deep.

That each which seems a living whole  
Should move its rounds, and, fusing all  
The skirts of self, again should fall,  
Remerging in the general soul,  
Is faith as vague as all unsweet.

Or again from the same poem and poet—

Eternal form will still divide  
 Eternal soul from all beside,  
 And I shall know him when we meet.

Christians and Westerners stick to personality, just as they build their faith upon a person, not upon an impersonal abstraction ; upon life and character, not upon an escape from life and character.

In fact, modern speculation sometimes, noting that evolution is towards deeper personality and richer individuality, boldly argues that the “not ourselves making for righteousness” must by parity of reasoning be a personal and a conscious god and not a mere stream of tendency. The typical Christian hymnologists, men like Moultrie and Montgomery and Matheson, Bright and Baynes and Bonar, Wesley, Whittier and Newman and Keble, betray necessarily the defects of their qualities and go through life indifferent, most of them, to most of the activities of life, to science and art, to physics and chemistry and biology and engineering : to history and even to archæology and anthropology and psycho-analysis, but they express better than the Buddhist, the Western clinging to character and personality and will and self : yes, even when they shock us by their gross neglect of common sense and human nature and the laws of health and cleanliness. Shocking indeed their ignorance of these things sometimes is : I remember a devout couple, a Church dignitary and his wife, who took charge of some Indian children in the absence of the parents in India : the children’s morals, no doubt, were well looked after and their catechism learned and their graces before and after meat duly said (as the judge arranged, you remember, for the little children of Shelley and Harriet Westwood), but their mother, when she returned, found more than

the usual combing and the usual comb necessary for those little orthodox heads. The dignitary himself was hardly less inconsiderate : he had a large parish and was asked from time to time to parish dinners. " I will bury you," he answered, " I will christen you, I will marry you, I will pray with you and preach to you : but I will *not* eat with you."

I remember another devout missionary, who seemed too good for this world : " Well," said a clerical inquirer who wanted a mission conducted, " but what are the flies in the ointment, what are the skeletons in the cupboard : you don't tell me that the man is a plaster saint or an apostle ? " " He has no deficiencies," answered his Bishop, " but what are themselves apostolical : soap and water." But even these unworldly persons did not so far ignore this world as to become Buddhists, mendicants and pillar saints.

As Aristotle soberly observes, when he is scandalized by Plato's leanings to a communistic and almost impersonal society ; without fatherhood or motherhood, or husband or wife or son, " It is reasonable," said Aristotle, " to find fault with selfishness : but it is not selfishness to love self, but to love self at the expense of others." Even Aristotle's intellectualism shied at Buddhism and Nirvana, and inclined to something more human and anthropomorphic.

I was speaking incidentally of the hymnologists and their limited atmosphere : religious, but very apathetic towards the world's activities : after all it is not as harmful to the world, as the atmosphere of the unscrupulous man of action, as the Napoleons and the Bismarcks : though Bismarck was not consciously irreligious and counted himself in his curious way an orthodox believer, his is not a testimony in favour of orthodox belief : rather a testimony how mere orthodoxy without the Christian spirit may be much

worse for the world than Christianity without the worldly spirit. His religion did not save Bismarck from unscrupulous doctoring of telegrams and ruthless ambition : he made, as the neat epigram goes, "Germany great and Germans small," and it ended in the débâcle of 1918.

Cavour was a wiser man of action than Bismarck, but even he repels : he is responsible with Mussolini for the "sacro egoismo" and vaulting ambition of present-day Italy : some of you will remember that Cavour had a friend and agent Massimo d'Azeglio, governor of Genoa : d'Azeglio was a gentleman, a Christian gentleman, not a mere Aristotelean gentleman or *μεγαλόψυχος* : and when he received instructions from Cavour to secretly supply arms to Garibaldi after Cavour had pledged himself to Austria to neutrality, d'Azeglio resigned, and retired from politics. Gentlemen are less interested in politics and politicians in consequence, and have been resigning ever since : and Cavour's frank admissions explain why. "Had I done for myself," said Cavour, "what I did for Italy, I should be a scoundrel."

Therein breathes and blows the plague-stricken atmosphere of politics : it rushes in where gentlemen and Christians fear to tread. Politics and Parliaments where men sit round and score off each other, like women at a sewing circle, first fascinate the mind, then debauch it and end by destroying both intellect and character and Christianity. The political passion for power and place and for defeating the opposition, mar, impair and almost destroy the charm of even a religious and high-minded statesman like Mr. Gladstone : I prefer the frank cynicism of a Disraeli : it is not only much more intellectually honest, but even more morally honest, than the capacity for self-deceit which lets a man feel that he has two aces up his sleeve which Providence has placed there : which lets



a man practise all the ruses and cunning of an old Parliamentary hand.

Again, is the more intellectual atmosphere of science and thought better for its possessor and for the world than the Christian atmosphere of the narrow hymnologists? Clough, in his *Amours de voyage*, thought that science alone sticks by a man to the end.

Not as the Scripture saith I think is the fact : ere our death day  
Faith and Love *do* vanish away : but knowledge abideth.

Well, does it? I have known Professors of Sciences and Languages who lost their knowledge even of the rudiments of their languages and sciences : who could not repeat the chemical symbol for water or the letters of the Greek alphabet, who could not distinguish their sons, even their best-loved Benjamins, from their loved and long-lost fathers : who could not identify the colleagues of fifty years' partnership : who could not identify their own wives : but though memory was gone like the visions of the night, their character remained the same : if they were kindly and considerate, considerate and kindly they remained, and shared their last meals with the unknown attendants who were their last companions in those asylums which were the last stage of their eventful or eventless history : their charity never gave out, though knowledge had vanished away and the power of the tongue had ceased and all power of preaching had failed. I am very incredulous after this when I read Plato and Aristotle on the persistence of the life of the intellect, and the brevity of the life of the moral qualities.

What of Swift? He was more an ambitious man of the world than a Christian, and when hope and faith and intelligence failed him he thought himself a misanthrope, and cursed the day of his birth, and theoretically cursed and hated his fellow-men : but only man in the abstract : he was always indulgent

and kind to the mere Dick, Tom and Harry, to the inferior men, the Michaels and Dennises and Barneys, whom he met in the streets and slums of that city of slums, Dublin.

Cicero was an ambitious man of the world as well as a very decent Christian, for a Pagan : a lovable Pagan : but his decent atmosphere did not prevent him from driving his beloved Tullia, his only daughter, into a horrid marriage with a scoundrelly young politician who borrowed money from him and did not pay : it did not prevent him from making a second and purely mercenary marriage for himself in his old age with an heiress : their marriage was not happier than Sir Francis Bacon's similar venture. You can find a few parallels of a sort to this, perhaps, in the lives of some or one of the hymnologists : especially of the broader-minded and more worldly type, the more statesmanlike type : but the men of the more narrowly religious atmosphere did not, I think, make these blunders : their religious atmosphere was deep as well as narrow : they did not ignore the peace of their homes and their home-lives, they knew how large a part of life is atmosphere and how large a part of atmosphere is wife, if they ignored the world outside their homes, and were indifferent to *its* thoughts and *its* activities. The devout atmosphere only falls short negatively, in its defects and its limitations : it does no disservice to the world : it only falls short of service. The world sometimes talks of religion as a mirage : well a mirage, after all, is not a mere illusion : it is a real and true goal which by the illusions of the senses, seems nearer and more easily attainable than it is in fact : the hymnologists foreshortened their Heaven : almost all devout Christians foreshorten their Heaven : I mean, see it much closer than it really is.

It is about time to sum up these long and rambling

discourses and digressions (*προσθήκας μοι ὁ λόγος ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐδίδητο*, as that inspiring Greek Herodotus used to say). Religion is unintelligible, but it is the only solution of life : it is quite incredible, but it must be substantially true.

Men have lived and died cheerfully and without faith, not infrequently, but generally from special causes peculiar to themselves. First : by dint of hard continuous work : which leaves no time for thought, still less for boredom and ennui. This is the commonest case and was once the case of millions and of the average man : who worked all day as a slave for some master and slept soundly all and every night from fatigue : this is also the case with most of the Sons of Martha : the untiring professional men of action, engineers, doctors and the like, "to them by birth is belief forbidden : from them till death is relief afar." Second : by dint of excellent health : which is like youth and like wine, only much better than wine because harmless : a beneficent intoxicant : and a beneficent continuous intoxication.

Matthew Arnold had no creed left nor any commandment of promise before his eyes : but he was happy partly from intellectual curiosity and from the amusement which life gave him : partly from his being a residual legatee of his father's Christianity ; but largely from the excellent health and physical vigour which intoxicated him : he vaulted, or nearly vaulted, a five-barred gate which most men of his years could not even climb over, within a few hours of his death : whence indeed the death which followed.

Third : by dint of intellectual curiosity : Rénan had no source of happiness in his creed : but he found life amusing and the débâcle of the modern world very entertaining : and so Taine and countless other intellectuals. Sometimes also and in this age it is golf which reconciles to life : "I never enjoy anything

now," said a Professor of science, "except the links : but don't tell my wife so."

Intellect disheartens and disillusions, but it has its compensations, and brings an interest in life lacking to the unintellectual : Nature always contrives somehow to square things in the long run, as we have seen in the abounding optimism about the near future, of the pessimist, Mr. Bertrand Russell. Apart from these special causes and special cases it is religion, and especially Christianity, which palliates and redeems life to the countless masses who have neither slavery nor health nor intellectual curiosity to enable them to kill time ; to the millions of common people more or less illiterates, and to the literates of one book—the *homines unius libri*—the hymnologists and the devout : it soothes even blindness : they "yield their flickering torch" to the Light of the World that "in its sunshine blaze, their day may fuller, brighter be." The Communists and Bolsheviks have discovered this obstacle to their creed : they denounce it as dope or dose or dole or drug : it keeps the masses from revolution, they perceive, as vodka kept the masses of Russia before the Russian revolution.

But they seem to shut their eyes to the patent fact that no revolution they can offer will make life its own reward, still less its own sufficient reward, for the majority of mankind : man will still be under sentence of death : and many under sentence of a lingering and painful death from ill health, from cancer and angina pectoris and arterial sclerosis : no revolution will cure the ills of ill health, no, nor solve the problems of the population question, of infanticide, abortion, prostitution, practical slavery, and wage-slavery.

Birth-control may mitigate the problem, but at a great cost to character and happiness (except, of course, the lawful form of birth-control, self-control



and continence : and that in turn depends on religion, on the instinct that this life is not the end).

Without that instinct and that religion life will still be unmeaning and hopeless to the majority of men and women over fifty years of age : even after birth-control and contraception have done their most imperfect work. The ancient world was wholly pessimist : Socrates thought that if one chose a night wherein one had slept profoundly without consciousness of any kind, and compared it with the other days and nights of one's life, few men, including the Sultan of Persia (and Socrates speaking popularly as a Greek, took him as the pattern of happiness instead of an awful example of unhappiness), would find many days or nights to compare favourably with it. Sophocles thought that not to be born were best ; next being born, to die ; and every one can see the truth of the most profound and passionate of Greek proverbs, " Whom the gods love die young," which fits in neatly with their other passionate proverb, " The half is greater than the whole." For those who live to old age the hardest of all precepts, as Archbishop Trench said, is the precept " to rejoice."

The only escape from their pessimism is the " noble lie " of Christianity, that is a creed which is at once noble and inspiring—not only a creed for slaves, as Nietzsche called it, though it is a blessed creed for slaves—and yet so difficult of belief as to seem unbelievable, unintelligible, incredible and in short a lie : a creed at once necessary to the salvation of the state, as Plato suggested, and necessary to the salvation of individuals (as Athanasius added), and yet like the Athanasian creed, a tissue of " incomprehensibles " (in the ordinary sense of that word). And yet it has to be incomprehensible and to remain so, in order to be a true religion at all ; in order to become a venture and a gamble of man's best instincts and of his con-

science : against his meaner instincts for cakes and ale and vulgar success.

If a man wish to be safe (*quicunque vult salvus esse*) secure against ennui, boredom and despair, it is necessary above all things that he hold the Christian faith : which faith is this, that he was put here for a purpose and that neither he nor this life is accident, or the misfit or the dud of a prentice Creator : that if he earn more life by his use of this life, more life he will have and admission to one or other of the many mansions and mountain-shelters : that if he do not earn more life by his use of this, he will either go out like a burnt match or a fused wire, or sink in life's scale and begin at a lower range, as the monkeys perhaps are doing, being perhaps degenerate men : in any case he will be called to an account of his life and of the use he has made of it, with perhaps a period of Purgatory (Plato only added Hell for Ardiæus, to have an awful example at hand for the impenitent : not for retribution's sake but for the impenitents' sake).

But to continue with the creed " which faith unless a man hold, no doubt he shall perish everlastingly, or at the least sink in the scale of existence : and if he reappear on earth it will be in the body of a monkey, or a wolf, or a snake, or a rat or some other noxious creature created by the prince of this world, and the power of darkness and the principle of evil."

I have parodied, you notice, the Athanasian creed, not I hope too flippantly ! I have only tried to sift out of it those truths which remain even in this age of open questions and lifted anchors, for sober free-thinkers : free-thinkers, of course, I mean in the proper sense of that misapplied and much-abused word : every one who thinks is a free-thinker : if he is not, he is not a thinker at all, only a victim of rooted prejudice or ineradicable superstition : or a timid follower of convention.

There is much compensation for the disappearance of merely conventional Christianity, and for the separation of Christianity from the creed of the State and legislature, of public opinion and legal law : Christianity once more becomes what it was originally, a serious and unworldly creed : and Christians, if any remain, may be once more what they were originally, the salt of the earth : by their fruits and their atmosphere, and only so, presumably, we shall know them : and Christian Baptism—even apart from the Catholic and the Anglo-Catholic creed of Baptismal regeneration—becomes once more a significant symbol, a declaration that the parents desire that the new-born child, the child of prayer it may be, and not the unwelcome issue of animal appetite, may grow up to serve, and in some faint and human measure follow after the only Redeemer this afflicted world has seen, and take up the cross of the only Saviour and Messiah who has authoritatively and effectually invited the weary and the heavy laden to bring their souls to Him for rest.

(A LECTURE AT BRANTFORD, ONTARIO)

I SUPPOSE it is safe to infer that you have been kind enough to ask me here this evening because my term at University College after covering nearly half a century is at last ending, and though I have lectured in Brantford in the course of those years half a dozen times or so, I am not likely to do so again, at least as an active Professor in University College : if I appear again it is likely to be as a Professor Emeritus, a Professor on the shelf, in the cupboard, a back number, a die-hard and last ditcher. This evening's entertainment is therefore a sort of send-off : but I hasten to add, to correct a misapprehension of some of my friends and former students, that I do not expect to be any further from Brantford than Toronto : how should I be ? if I am still in this terrestrial sphere and one of the things still left unremarkable beneath the visiting moon ? how should I be ? Fifty years is a large part of any man's life : a larger part of the life of a man who had already lived a quarter of a century before he had the luck to strike Canada. Fifty years make a man a Canadian : all the more if he married a Canadian wife and if his children be Canadians : though he be still an Englishman and counting on dying as he has lived under the British flag, and counting also, as you count, I doubt not, on Canada remaining under the British flag long after he is dead and buried and forgotten, and when he possesses in University College only a



space of six feet by four on a common-room wall for a portrait, which six years hence will be unrecognized by the quick-changing generations of students, and only identified by a few ageing Professors and some white-headed graduates, who will recollect that it belonged to one who once taught a dead language in University College: a dead language which was sometimes supposed to be also a dying language on this continent and in this Province: the Greeks would have liked the oxymoron a dead and dying language—*νεκρός τις δυσθανατῶν*: it occurs in Thucydides' account of the plague.

Which brings me to a subject appropriate, I think, to this occasion and to a sort of funeral sermon or *λόγος ἐπιτάφιος* or *τροιδεῖπνον* but it is not a funeral sermon on the Greek language: *πόλλοῦ γε καὶ δεῖ*. Greek, like Charles II or like myself, takes an unconscionably long time a-dying. And that not only, because, like Charles II, it covers a large part of the wit and shrewdness and knowledge of human nature, which will always appeal to men, but because it covers also the beginnings of all the philosophy, science and history which philosophers, scientists and historians are still pursuing; and because out of the mouth of one Greek in particular, Plato, proceed all the speculations and the thoughts which are still engaging the attention of mankind. If the Greeks did not include, if even Plato did not quite include, all the religious and moral fervour, which have supported and consoled all the depressions and disappointments of man and delivered him in some measure from the pessimism of the ancient classical world, and of the Oriental and Hindoo and Buddhist world of all ages, well that is also true of that very witty man but not very well-inspired moralist Charles II. He did not furnish religious consolation or relieve the sadness of a deathbed.


What shall I say, then, of this language which dies so hard and by its wit and wisdom attains to so remote a longevity, even among an alien race and upon a new and unknown continent, and among a people whom the Greeks would have counted barbarians ?

If I may parody without profanity some words of inspiration used originally in a much higher cause, I feel inclined to say that I have fought a good fight and kept the faith—the faith, I mean, in the supreme value of the classics in education : and now to-night as my last opportunity I must set forth the grounds of my faith ; why have they, how *can* they have, a supreme value still in education ?

First and foremost because they are not vocational training : they are not training a man to make his living by a narrow calling, a narrow trade or profession : they are training him to think and to think for himself and to be a law unto himself, as the Greeks often were, generally were, even when they were most lawless, and disrespectful of the written law. Socrates was put to death because he unsettled young men and disturbed conventions and was one of the first of Protestants : but he was never an atheist, as they said of him, but a devout follower of conscience and of God : and he has survived the city and the people and the civilization to whom and for whom he gave a creed, which they could not “ bear yet ” : and being dead he yet speaks : he taught men to think and think, and yet again to think : like Columbus he said, to his spiritual followers, the mariners of a sea much wider and deeper than the Atlantic, the ocean of human thought : “ Sailor,” he said, “ sail on and on and on : examine your minds and souls and consciences and he that doeth their will shall know of the doctrine ” ; education is not vocation but thought : Greek is the language of free thought, as Latin is the language of order and discipline and law

and obedience: and between the two they include the whole duty of man: the restless, ever-changing, ever-moving intelligence, and the sober sense of order and law and caution and common sense. Common sense is intolerable unless it is based on Greek metaphysics, but Greek metaphysics equally intolerable without Roman common sense.

And secondly the very problems of our society—political and economic and moral—if they have not been precisely anticipated by Rome and Greece, have at least been anticipated more nearly by those two ancient civilizations than by any Western civilization since: see how they handled the difficulties of democracy.

Sometimes in Greece they evaded the political dangers of our democracy—the government of ignorance—by unlawful ingenuities; by the institution of slavery, I mean; as the Southern States in my own lifetime tried to evade the difficulty of democracy by slavery, and ventured to argue that it was expedient that one race should die to liberty and self-respect in order that another race, the white race, should have leisure for life and government and happiness (Calhoun, Samuel Dew, Eliot Harper and Fitz-hugh, p. 21, vol. II. of *Morison's History of the U.S.*). 

Sometimes—in Rome—they evaded the political dangers and chaos of democracy—by another ingenuity—hardly much more lawful—by autocracy and Cæsarism: just as the heir of the Cæsars in Rome to-day is trying to evade them, and is for the moment at least succeeding, to the amazement and disgust of most men not Italians, of all men who are still clinging to a belief in the virtues of freedom and liberty and self-government. But Italy is not the only place where Cæsarism perhaps may be expected to flourish: Spain there is and Persia and Turkey and perhaps modern Greece: and possibly, no one yet knows,

possibly modern and nationalistic India : democracy is not yet possible there certainly : perhaps what the Indian nationalists will prefer, will be a revival of native Indian rulers and Indian princes.

See again how the classics handled economic and moral problems. Sometimes in both Greece and Rome they evaded the economic dangers of civilization—the population question—by methods of birth-control in which the cure was worse than the disease—abortion, prostitution, infanticide.

But they even anticipated the more specious and presentable and decorous modern methods of birth-control : anticipated them word for word by the mouth of Aristotle. Whatever be the merits of our birth-control and its demerits, the lawfulness or the dangers of so cheating Nature, the system is at least lifted bodily from Aristotle ; it was he who began to teach contraception. No one, I repeat, reads the classics carefully without coming across all the political, economic and moral problems which block our path to-day : and there is no problem, moral or economic, which so blocks our way at this moment as birth-control.

Yet other reasons are there, slighter, yet not slight, which recommend the classics still as the best vehicles of education.

The natural sciences are not the best vehicle because they are without human interest, without a personal reaction and repercussion on character except for the small minority who are born naturalists or students of Nature and original researchers in the field of science : education ought to have an immediate though more indirect than direct reaction upon character : but science is apt to leave the character where it found it, for better or for worse.

English is not the best vehicle, because it is much too easy and has no discipline in it : or where it is



not easy and has discipline—English literature, I mean—it is premature: it is a mature study, a life-long study for mature men and women. But children get a discipline for imagination, for effort, for patience, by puzzling out the meaning of a classical language, which they can do best at their age, because the child's memory is tolerant of, and even sometimes grateful for, foreign vocabularies and the regularities and irregularities, logical or illogical rules, of Latin and Greek grammar. These classical grammars, especially Latin, are good whetstones for the logic and discipline of English grammar: and if the classical literature so read is full of commonplaces and household proverbs and elegant quotations, it is none the worse, it is all the better. One has to make these commonplaces, proverbs and quotations one's own sooner or later, and the sooner the better: they are a large part of life and thought and useful knowledge: education means to know the best that has been said and thought on common subjects.

Modern languages are not the best vehicle of education: their literature and their language alike are largely based on Latin or Greek: the language on Latin, and the literature on Greek: but on both it is better to go to the fountain head: no one wants to read Racine, e.g., very keenly if he can read Racine's Greek originals.

History (in English) is not enough: it is like English, too easy and too difficult: too easy, as so much memorizing and reading: too difficult, if taken seriously, because much too mature: what good can a child get by mugging up "constitutions" and "laws" and British North American Acts and pondering on the problem: Can a "Dominion" be neutral when Great Britain is at war? The only history that has a value for children is biography and anecdote and books of golden deeds and of the golden dead

and living : and these are best when combined with the Greek and Latin languages and authors, wherein they have been recorded : so that the discipline in logic and grammar and effort and industry and imagination may be included with the moral edification of history and biography ; e.g. Rollin's ancient history, which is largely translated from Herodotus, has inspired many clever boys to give themselves to the classics.

For these three reasons—there no doubt are others, such as the advantage of getting away from our own small age and its transient and local prejudices and ignorances—the study of the classical languages, literature and history appears to me to still hold the field as the most fruitful, the most practical, the most direct, the most entertaining exercise for the development of imagination, thought, curiosity, patience, industry, logic ; all the intellectual and many of the moral qualities which education ought to develop.

Perhaps some one says in objection, “ the Greeks only learned one language : their own ” : that is the best argument against the classics that I know : but then the Greeks *were* the Greeks : the rest of us have not their natural advantages : besides, they had no chance of learning a foreign language, very few the chance of learning Latin : and *it* had no literature ; but the unlearned Romans not only learned Greek as well as Latin but learned it so carefully, as often to write their own memoirs and history in Greek : many cultivated Romans had little Latin but more Greek, and all of them borrowed their literature from Greece : and though they were a very conservative and a very unintelligent people, all the intelligent men and women studied Greek and spoke and wrote Greek. What stronger testimonial to the value of the Greek language and literature can be furnished ?

The best thing in education is not yet included,

religion : but that cannot be taught by education, in the narrow sense of the word, only caught by example and from atmosphere and home and surroundings : cannot be learned like Latin and mathematics, only earned, like Faith, by willing and by prayer and effort and conscience and divine grace ; parents in this indolent age try to lay the teaching of it upon the schools and Sunday schools, which is absurd : the schools minister to the intellect and the intellect is essentially agnostic. The word is not good Greek though the thing is : but religion is not of the intellect but of the instincts and emotions and aspirations and affections and of the character, and its chief source is naturally and properly the home, and next perhaps to the home Rome : I mean the history of the primitive and unsophisticated early Romans with their deep instinct for simple honesty and truth-speaking. Education, in the ordinary and narrow sense is a much smaller thing than religion : but such as it is, the world cannot do better than stick to the classics : there is no royal road to education, nor any democratic road, nor any Canadian road.





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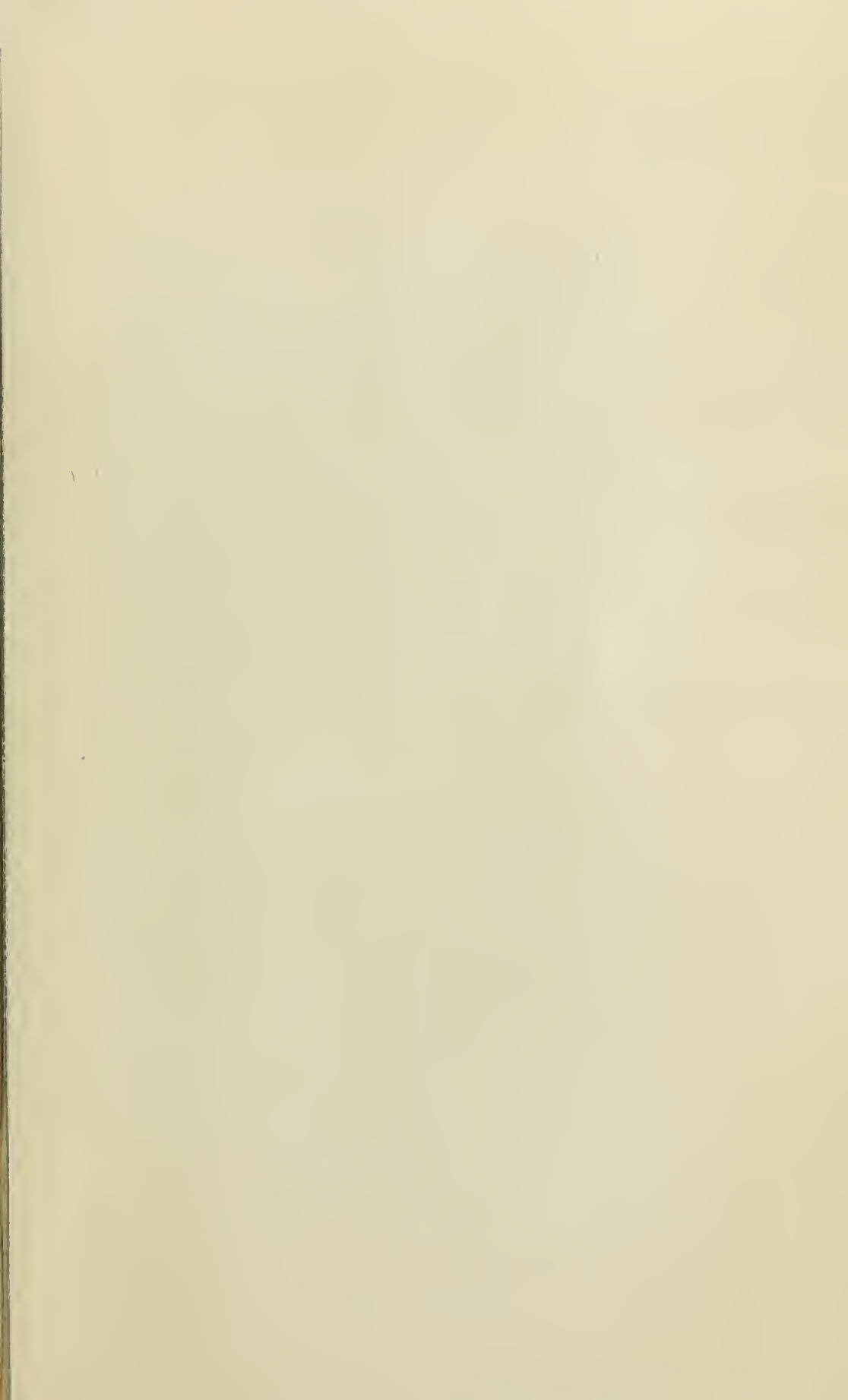
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